DRUMS, RAPS, AND SONG-GAMES: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF MUSIC AND PEACEBUILDING IN THE AFRO-COLOMBIAN TOWN OF LIBERTAD (SUCRE)

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May 18, 2018.

To Ralam, Chabelo,
And all the musicians in Libertad.
You show the way.

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DRUMS, RAPS, AND SONG-GAMES: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF MUSIC AND PEACEBUILDING IN THE AFRO-COLOMBIAN TOWN OF LIBERTAD (SUCRE)

Throughout the world, violent conflicts negatively impact economies, cultural practices, and the social relations within societies. Focusing on a case study of a cooperative national and community effort that highlights musical and traditional cultural practices, this dissertation explores programs aimed at peacebuilding in post-conflict societies. The Afro-Caribbean town of Libertad, Colombia, suffered violent ruptures during a rightwing paramilitary occupation between 1996 and 2004. In 2007, the Colombian national government began working with community members to implement a Collective Reparation Plan to assist in rebuilding the community and its social fabric. Based on local beliefs that cultural and artistic practices play key roles creating frameworks for collective action and community-building, they designed projects to revive traditional musics and cultural expressions as well as to create new works that resonate more directly with the youth. The revival of traditional funerary wake games and the construction of the musical genre *bullenrap*—a fusion of hip-hop and local *bullerengue*—exemplify local strategies for ameliorating problems such as the loss of traditional knowledges and intergenerational tensions in creative and nonviolent ways. *Liberteño* artists have built frameworks for solidarity and education through participatory performances that empower community members and address local issues through empathy. Based on long-term ethnographic research, this dissertation argues that these programs have been successful because they: 1) build upon a long history of using cultural expressions to foster community solidarity and

collective action; 2) foster collective initiatives of local leaders and their social capital; 3) embody the creative resilience of artists in managing local cultural resources towards social ends, and 4) maximize the participatory approach within government programs, advocating sensitivity to local needs. Contributing to the literature in ethnomusicology and peacebuilding, this dissertation offers a methodology for research and design of programs that recognize the transformative potentials of musical and cultural practices in post-conflict scenarios in Colombia and around the world.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	*Original Spanish name*	*English translation*
AFM	Afro-Música en los Montes de María	Afro-Music in the María Mountains
CCM	Mercado Cultural del Caribe	Caribbean Cultural Market
CRP	Plan Integral de Reparación Colectiva	Integral Collective Reparation Plan
CRS	Sujeto de Reparación Colectiva	Collective Reparation Subject
IC	Comité de Impulso	Impulse Committee
JPFO	Organización Juvenil Fomentadora de paz de Libertad	Juvenile Peace-Fostering Organization of Libertad
NCRR	Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación	National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation
UARIV	Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas	Unit for the Victims' Integral Attention and Reparation
WIP	Iniciativa de Mujeres Colombianas por la Paz	Colombian Women's Initiative for Peace

Abbreviation	*Original English name*
IOM	United Nations' International Organization for Migration
USAID	United States'Agency for International Development
UNESCO	United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Fig. 1. Map of Colombia with the Libertad area highlighted in relation to Cartagena.

Fig. 2. Libertad and the city of Cartagena.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: LOCAL MUSICS AND EXPRESSIVE CULTURE AS PEACEBUILDING PRACTICES IN POST-CONFICT SOCIETIES

It was around seven o'clock at night when I turned down Calle Balsa Street to start walking up the slight hill that marks the beginning of the Pondo neighborhood. The street was unpaved and covered with rocks, like all other streets in the Afro-Caribbean town of Libertad in Colombia. One or two street lamps were the only available lights—since I didn't count the shining eyes of dogs, cats and hogs wandering around the darkened street—though they were enough for me to see my path. As soon as I got to the top of the hill, the soundwaves of drumming and singing just a few blocks away hit my ears. I could see the dancing crowd gathered on the street in front of the house of Isabel Martínez, a well-known elder singer from the community. The crowd chanted the chorus of a song being played by a local band. The performers were young Afro-Colombians, some of them wearing baseball hats and holding microphones so they could freestyle rap lyrics, while others were playing traditional drums in the background, holding steady *bullerengue* rhythms and chanting responses. There were around ninety people in the audience. The main contingent consisted of more than sixty children between the ages of five and thirteen who were in the first rows of the "arena," dancing and singing to the music, while around them thirty adults were checking out the show from the back rows in the middle of the street, stomping their feet, dancing, and hanging out.

About ten performers were on stage, some of them playing traditional drums and shakers, while the others were singing and dancing (although counting was hard because

many people were moving on and off the stage, forming a porous boundary between performers and audience). The members of the local band Afro-Música en los Montes de María (Afro-Música or AFM) had been performing for about half an hour, and they were playing their most popular repertoire. People were requesting songs from this young band, which combines local traditional Afro-Colombian rhythms with hip-hop, addressing issues related to local culture and community cohesion. After a while, band members encouraged children to jump on stage, to grab the microphone, and to sing one of their songs with them. Several kids did, using the opportunity to live their first experiences of singing on stage, accompanied by a live band and in front of an audience.

It had been only three months since my last visit to Libertad, but I noticed that the activities of the local music project Afro-Música had evolved in powerful ways, following the main guidelines they had set for their activities about a year ago: recovering local cultural practices, using music as means to reconstruct the social fabric of the town, and rehabilitating intergenerational relations. This powerful performance that I witnessed the day I returned to town was one of many actions taken by local musicians in Libertad to build communal relationships and to alleviate social problems in a town torn apart by violence, poverty, and fragmentation.

* * *

This dissertation explores the roles of music and other forms of expressive culture within peacebuilding and recovery programs in Libertad in what is today called the period of "post-conflict" in Colombia. It provides an analysis of a situation in which victims of violent conflict are consciously and actively using local arts to construct peace. Many of the initiatives of community leaders and musicians have become part of government-run

programs, the Integral Collective Reparation Plans (CRPs), which intend to address the needs of communities that have been victimized by a protracted period of conflict and armed occupation. Those participating within local projects also work with NGO programs operating in the area. Thus, the goals of local leaders and musicians, local and national governments, and NGO programs interact in the context of the local CRP in Libertad—sometimes rather seamlessly and sometimes not. This CRP has since become the navigational chart for local organizations and leaders working to construct community development initiatives, to make amends to the people of Libertad for all that they suffered during the conflict, and to promote peacebuilding, understood as a process of dialogue geared towards transforming violence and tension into constructive social realtionships. Based on long-term ethnographic research within the contexts of these initiatives, I examine the ways music projects, based primarily on traditional collective practices, embrace peacebuilding strategies in this post-conflict scenario; I also examine the roles played by the institutions and organizations that run these programs.

I argue that, within these initiatives, the goal of revitalizing traditional musics responds to local beliefs that music has been and can be used to accomplish community building because of the ways it empowers community members, helps to reconstruct networks of cooperation, and generates frameworks for creative and nonviolent expression, all of which work together to build common ground among community members. As I will illustrate, current communal music projects in Libertad are playing an important role in the social integration of the community today. These music projects have had a positive impact on community members of diverse local groups, not only in the recovery of traditional cultural practices but also as part of broader processes of conflict transformation

and the restoration of the local social fabric. In their article theorizing the idea of "sense of community," David McMillan and David Chavis describe the social fabric as a term used to represent the "strength in interpersonal relationships" in a community, which can be assessed through a diverse range of neighbor interactions (McMillan and Chavis 1986: 7). A strong social fabric is the consequence of a developed sense of community, which for McMillan and Chavis is determined by four criteria: membership and sense of belonging; influence and sense of mattering; integration and the fulfillment of needs; and shared emotional connections (1986: 9). Thus, sense of community can be defined as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (McMillan 1976; quoted in McMillan and Chavis 1986: 9). Such an idea of sense of commnunity is believed in Libertad to be easily facilitated through music and performance.

In particular, I will analyze four factors that help explain the dynamic relation between the recovery of traditional practices and post-conflict community healing in the Libertad case: 1) the historical and sociocultural roles of festive and participatory musics in Afro-Colombian societies, including Libertad, as people have used them for centuries as a tool for resistance, transformation, and community-building; 2) the resilience of a group of Liberteño musicians and artists who consciously manage their cultural resources to create works that relate not only to local musical traditions but also to contemporary expressions such as hip-hop; 3) the existence of multiple levels of social capital associated with music practices, social capital that is embodied in local music organizations linked to the CRP, to other local organizations, to broader government initiatives, and to NGOs; and 4) the

presence of institutional programs in Libertad that enable participatory methods that empower leaders to orient actions more particularly toward local needs. It is the combination of these four factors that enables music to have such power in these processes of social transformation.

In some places, music has been used to promote violence, war, and aggression (Cusick 2006 and 2008, Kartomi 2010, Kent 2008, Bergh and Sloboda 2010, O'Connell 2010). Why is the Libertad case different? In Libertad, people use music as a peacebuilding practice, not because of its therapeutic character in decontextualized clinical settings, but because it aligns with a concrete ancestral history of similar practices, as well as with current social dynamics of community building, where identity markers, such as historical events and locally produced musics, are fundamental. Music programs that orient their practices towards social integration must respond to the specific demands of their sociocultural realities. A clear understanding of history, combined with consideration of current sociopolitical scenarios–in addition to the existence of intentionally transformative artistic practices–can contribute to the creation of social frameworks that facilitate emancipatory and socially transformative musical practices. Such is the case of music in the town of Libertad.

This research builds on theories of peacebuilding and community transformation as well as recent ethnomusicological scholarship related to music and conflict (Harrison 2012, Sandoval 2016, Bergh and Sloboda 2010). A core lesson from studying music in the context of peacebuilding is that music is not an inherently positive or socially constructive practice. What music does in society depends on both its historical and sociocultural contexts and the local beliefs about it. Thus, rather than arguing that music is inherently

good for peacebuilding, I emphasize the importance of considering the specific sociocultural and historical context of a community when planning and evaluating projects related to music and conflict transformation (Sandoval 2016, Bergh and Sloboda 2010).

Music can play different roles in different contexts, and a large number of regional CRPs use music in one way or another. Today several other communities in the region are also including music as part of their reparation plans. In this context, the Libertad case sheds light on the potential social roles and effects of music practices in areas of national conflict and in post-conflict societies, in Colombia and elsewhere. This dissertation addresses post-conflict state policymaking and identity politics through an understanding of the social and political roles of music and expressive culture, thus contributing to scholarship and practice related to state policy and development programs.

Photo 1. Local cultural leaders and musicians Isabel Martínez ("Chabelo") and Luis Miguel Caraballo ("Ralam") at a performance in Chabelo's house.

Music in Post-Conflict Libertad

Libertad is a small Afro-Colombian town on the Caribbean Coast, in one of the oldest regions of free black settlement in the country, dating back about 400 years. Conflict

came to this rural town in the mid-1990s when a right-wing paramilitary army occupied Libertad for nearly a decade and engaged in multiple forms of terrorism, violence, and social control upon locals. The occupation led to forced disappearances, murder, torture, forced labor, and sexual abuse as well as the disruption of local traditional expressions, social relations, and community gatherings (IOM 2012a: 93). From 1996 to 2004, for instance, the paramilitary squad controlled or prohibited all community-organized initiatives, including banning the performance of cultural expressions such as bullerengue drum-and-chant musical performances and funerary wake rituals. These cultural practices had long been key activities in the community precisely because they generated frameworks for social integration, solidarity, and empathy among neighbors and community members. The oppressive actions of the paramilitaries took a high toll on the social fabric of the community, disarticulating networks of musicians and ritual specialists, degrading the roles of local leaders and elders, isolating community members from one another, and seeding mistrust.

That branch of rightwing paramilitary armies lost control in Libertad, in part because of new legislation enacted in Colombia in 2006 that was intended to demobilize these illegal groups throughout the country.[1] Efforts followed from the central government to expand this legislation to implement collective reparation plans nationally, plans

[1] Law 975 of 2005, also called "Ley de Justicia y Paz" (Justice and Peace Law), was passed during the Álvaro Uribe Vélez government as an attempt to acknowledge the victims of the armed conflict, to set up strategies for their reparation, and to delineate actions towards allowing illegal armed groups to demobilize and turn into justice. The law was very controversial, and many criticized it for granting significant impunities for war crimes committed by right-wing paramilitary armies. Uribe Vélez has been a controversial figure himself and has been accused many times of having close relationships with paramilitaries.

Unless otherwise specified, all translations from Spanish to English were done by the author.

intended to address victims of the armed conflict.[2] A national "post-conflict" agenda followed the signing of a peace agreement between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - Popular Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo; FARC-EP) that ended a fifty-year-long internal armed conflict.[3]

The Plan Integral de Reparación Colectiva (Integral Collective Reparation Plan, CRP) in Libertad started in 2007, managed by the government's Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas (Unit for the Victims' Attention and Integral Reparation; hereafter, the "Victims Unit"). Like all other CRPs nationwide, the program aims to repair specific damages caused by conflict and facilitate development in other areas such as health services and infrastructure. Its methodology is based on principles of participatory development that emphasize the importance of community participation in designing and implementing projects, including those aimed at community integration and the rebuilding of social relations between community members (IOM 2012a).

Libertad's CRP is particularly interesting because it explicitly proposes using traditional musical and cultural expressions as mechanisms for peacebuilding, a goal that community members inserted into the program. This goal is listed within Libertad's CRP

[2] Aspects related to the attention to and reparation of victims of the armed conflict in Law 975/2005 were later replaced by the current Victims Law, Law 1448/2014.

[3] The "Final Agreement for the Termination of Conflict" was signed in Bogotá on November 24, 2016, by both government and FARC leaders after four years of the Havana Peace Talks. This agreement was a priority in the agenda of President Juan Manuel Santos, who pushed for it for years against hardcore opposition. "Post-agreement" is a term used to refer to the period after the signature and validation in Congress of the Peace Agreement between FARC-EP and the Colombian government. The term is not equivalent to "post-conflict," which is the official word used in government documents for this new phase. However, scholars and political analysts are keen to be critical of the use of the term, since there is still conflict in many regions. For instance, neo-paramilitary armies have been confiscating restituted lands, and local leaders have been systematically killed even after the signing of the agreement (over 120 as of January 2018).

as the Recovery of Communal Living and Social Development program, and it has two main objectives: 1) achieving intergenerational integration through traditional expressive practices, such as bullerengue (drums, chants, and dance) and traditional funerary song-games; and 2) providing spaces, including a cultural center and community radio station, to foster public dialogue, information sharing, and the promotion of local culture (IOM 2012b).

Libertad is a social context in which peacebuilding initiatives flow between grassroots programs[4] and state-designed sensitization campaigns, where rural traditional Afro-Colombian lifestyles interact with contemporary Caribbean urban popular culture, and where the drug trade is still part of social reality, influencing politics and sometimes affecting the reparation plan itself.

To tackle this complexity and discern the roles music practices are playing in peacebuilding and the collective reparation of the community, I seek to answer the following questions, organized in relation to five primary areas:

1. Local musics: How do Afro-Colombian musical practices, as constructed in post-conflict Libertad, help realize the goals of the CRP as well as that of other peacebuilding initiatives? How does the history of music practices and conflict in the region, along with the cultural memories and narratives about them, impact current communal processes? Is there evidence that music practices have influence on the larger Libertad community?
2. Stakeholder agendas: What are the diverse interests and agendas of stakeholders involved in the CRP in using traditional Afro-Colombian musics and other cultural

[4] In this dissertation, I understand the term "grassroots" as activities that local members of a community initiate, lead, and sustain without significant support from outside institutions or organizations.

expressions as a technique to advance peacebuilding initiatives, such as fostering rehabilitation of the social fabric or creating media strategies to dignify victims? How do music practices and community rehabilitation initiatives articulate with each other?

3. Local culture: How and in what contexts do stakeholders negotiate the meanings of "local culture," "Afro-Colombian identity," and "tradition"? The meanings of these terms are important in the implementation of music programs related to the CRP because these programs explicitly embrace local traditional music practices and discourses, though sometimes combined with contemporary Caribbean popular musics. Have recent conflicts and new cultural programs affected how these ideas are conceived? How do people see the role of local cultural practices in the collective reparation of the community?

4. Local and national collective reparation: To what extent does the music program portion of Libertad's reparation plan relate to other peacebuilding efforts that are part of the larger government agenda for collective reparation? What opportunities does the Libertad case offer to post-conflict work in other communities? And, what larger implications can be inferred from this study?

5. Reflexivity: To what extent does my engaged ethnographic practice in Libertad during this research contribute to or influence the collective reparation process? To what extent can I distinguish my contributions to the local music processes as musical advisor, instructor, and researcher (as small as they may be) from the achievements of community initiatives sparked by years of concerted efforts by local leaders and organizations?

The town of Libertad is an ideal location in which to study not only the roles of music in peacebuilding initiatives, but also how the work of ethnomusicologists in these projects can be enriched by ethnographic research as well as by engaged or activist research approaches.

Photo 2. Calle Balsa street in Libertad.

The Afro-Colombian Town of Libertad

Libertad is a small coastal town in the Colombian Caribbean region, two-and-a-half hours south of Colombia's tourist mecca, the city of Cartagena de Indias. The township is nestled in the lowest part of the Montes de María (María Mountains), a regional mountain range that runs along the central part of the northern coast. The María Mountains help to mark a border of a defined cultural territory on this area of the coast in the sense that these coastal communities share culture, economy, and history, including a collective memory of resistance against the armed conflict in the late twentieth century. Part of the municipality

of San Onofre, in Sucre Department,[5] Libertad is reached via a hilly and unpaved road that curves down ten miles from the town of Pajonal towards the ocean shore. There, half a mile from the coast, lies Libertad.

This Afro-Colombian town has a profound cultural history that some say dates back to the early seventeenth century, when *Cimarrones*—free black settlers who had first escaped Cartagena during the slave revolts—founded their own towns and settlements in the region. These settlements later became the famous *palenques*, or free black towns, one of which, San Basilio de Palenque, to this day bears the title of "first free town of the Americas"—also the title of a classic book by historian Roberto Arrázola—gaining its independence from Spain by Royal decree in 1713 (cf. Arrázola 1970). Knowing the history of this region of early Afro-Colombian settlement is fundamental for understanding how Afro-Colombian traditional cultural practices have flourished, adapted, and persisted for centuries.

A large *corregimiento,*[6] Libertad has around 2,000 inhabitants, most of whom reside in the town proper; others live scattered in the nearby farmlands. Three minor settlements, Sabanetica, Pisisí, and Arroyo Seco (with a population of approximately 1,000) are also included within the corregimiento. Libertad was founded in 1933 by a group of landless Afro-Colombian settlers who entered the area and began agricultural work on vacant state lands that previously had been claimed by large landlord families (García Caraballo 2010). Since its foundation, Libertad has been primarily an agricultural district, producing and exporting rice, coconut, corn, yucca, yam, sesame, plantain,

[5] *Departamento* is the official name of administrative territorial units in Colombia; these are similar to "states" in the United States.

[6] *Corregimientos* are administrative units, usually in rural areas, that are smaller than, and dependent on, a municipality.

sugarcane, bean, lime, and dairy, among other products. Previously, farmers used to sail to Cartagena to sell their produce at the Bazurto city market. Today they transport their products by bus or truck to regional markets in San Onofre, Sincelejo, and Cartagena.

Historically a land of farmers, Libertad has been isolated in many ways from the rest of the nation and, to some extent, the national government. The local calendar and yearly activities are usually governed by arigultural cycles, including the work of sowing the fields (*roza*) and bringing in the harvest (*cosecha*). Despite its size, the town has only one nurse and one medical doctor, the latter available in town only four days a week. One pharmacy provides access to basic medicine. The town has no sewage system, and most households do not have running water. Electricity fluctuates and frequently damages appliances. Access to cellphone service also fluctuates and is usually unreliable for heavy internet activity. Despite having a small church, there is no resident priest; one is summoned when necessary from the Sincelejo Archdioceses. Computer and internet services in the town are scarce, and only a few households have computers and printers, while a single "Internet kiosk" provides internet service for the public.

Residents of Libertad celebrate festivals and other holidays with food, games, alcohol, music, and dance. Among the important local celebrations are Holy Week (Semana Santa), the Virgin of Las Mercedes' Patron Saint Festival (Fiesta Patronal de la Virgen de las Mercedes) on September 29, the Day of All Souls (Día de los Difuntos) on November 2nd, Cartagena's independence day on November 11, and Christmas (Navidad). In the past, these celebrations used to be accompanied by the local *baile cantao*[7] group,

[7] *Baile cantao*, literally translated as "sung dance," is a term used by members of some Afro-Colombian communities as well as by Colombian folklorists to refer to many varieties of local drum-and-chant musical traditions of African descent, which also include dance as a structural part of the performance.

which performed local drum-and-chant bullerengue music in public spaces all night long, sometimes for many days. Local and regional *gaita* ensembles–consisting of traditional flutes and drums–and *fandangos,* the name for regional brass bands, were sometimes hired for these celebrations as well. This practice has weakened in the last couple of decades, and these ensembles have been progressively replaced with big sound systems (*picó*) that are hired to set up on the streets and play records of Caribbean popular musics, such as *champeta, vallenato,* and *reguetón.* As of recently, though, brass bands were still used occasionally for these activities, and local *baile cantao* and bullerengue practices have recently started to become more active. In the larger Caribbean region, these sound systems consist of large music playback and amplification equipment (the larger, the better) suitable for neighborhood performances and street dance parties focusing on specialized musics often not broadcasted through radio stations, but with a strong popular appeal in lower socioeconomic populations. This practice has been documented by scholars both in Colombia and elsewhere (Pacini-Hernandez 1996, Stolzoff 2000, among others).

Traditional celebration foods in Libertad include, among other local delicacies: stewed fish in *salsa criolla* with coconut black bean rice with fried plantains and beet salad; beef rib soup with yucca, plantain, and yam; and pork coconut rice with cheese-topped fried corncakes and green salad. It is common to share food during festive times, and invitations to different households to eat specialty foods abound. Liberteño people are hospitable and festive, always looking for opportunities to tell a joke or an entertaining story. Locals in Libertad also have a large repertoire of board games and enacted song-games that they play during special occasions and celebrations. Most enacted song-games

in this area, however, belong to the context of funerary-wake rituals, an entertainment aspect of these important local gatherings that keep attendees awake throughout the night between prayer cycles.

In the 1990s a multinational shrimp company arrived in Libertad, promising development and economic security to the community. Because the consortium needed large amounts of land to build pools for the shrimp farms, they arrived with money and offered to buy land from locals. While some community members today remember the company treating them fairly in these land purchases, others recall the company taking advantage of locals, paying them less than fair-market sums for their lands. Many Liberteño families sold their lands or traded them for other lands that they eventually sold, but their members were given jobs with the company where they earned a steady income for decades. The local economy was sustained by this shrimp company until 2012 when the company went bankrupt and retreated from Libertad, leaving behind an economy devastated by unemployment and highly diminished agricultural activity, due to the lack of lands owned by local farmers. This economic situation, amplified by the deterioration of cooperative social relations and trust between neighbors due to the paramilitary occupation, is still a critical problem hindering the rehabilitation of the community.

Allied with large landowners and politicians from the region, the paramilitary took control over the entire María Mountains region, seeking to guard the interests of the regional elites and to control the drug trafficking trade routes. The shrimp production continued, though, after Marco Tulio Pérez, alias “El Oso” (“The Bear”), and his paramilitaries arrived in the town in 1997. El Oso was commander of the Frente Golfo de Morrosquillo (Morrosquillo Gulf Front), a squad belonging to the Bloque Héroes de

Montes de María (Heroes of María Mountains Bloc) from the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia), the major extreme right wing and anti-subversive terrorist army in Colombia at the time. El Oso and his people remained in Libertad for eight years, exploiting and abusing the local population while safeguarding the economic interests of their paramilitary and drug-dealing project. They also worked in service of regional political elites.

Today residents remember this period as "*la violencia*"[8] (the violence) and consider it to have been the hardest time the people of Libertad have ever seen. A reign of terror was imposed by El Oso and his one hundred or so men and collaborators, who stole lands, goods, and money from locals, carried out three massacres, raped dozens of women, acted as the defacto law, demanded all kinds of reverence, and punished whoever opposed them. During this time, most collective social activities were curtailed or forbidden. Without the regularly occurring social events that previously had brought community members together, people became isolated and feelings of mutual mistrust increased. After the paramilitaries were finally forced out of Libertad in 2004, the local Integral Collective Reparation Plan (CRP) started to take shape through a collective effort from community members and the central government.

[8] This local phenomenon is not to be confused with what twentieth-century Colombian historians refer to as La Violencia (with capital letters), which was a period of intense bipartisan political violence between liberals and conservatives at the national level, sparked by the murder of liberal political idol and presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán on April 9, 1948. This period of virulent confrontation took place mostly in the rural areas and ended in 1958 with the Frente Nacional (National Front) agreement, in which liberals and conservatives agreed to take turns governing Colombia every four years. This agreement excluded participation from other emerging political forces for sixteen years and, therefore, is considered by scholars to have caused the early 1960s transformation into the current armed conflict involving communist guerillas, drug-lords, rightwing paramilitaries, and diverse forms of state terrorism (cf. Palacios Rozo 2013).

Photo 3. Young performer and cultural leader Ralam and elder musician and culture specialist Miguel Sarmiento holding traditional gaita flutes.

Music as Peacebuilding, Collective Reparation, and Communal Rehabilitation in Libertad

In this thesis I will discuss a range of projects that involve expressive culture within and beyond the CRP, but I will focus on two primary cases that illustrate how musical practices provide opportunities to strengthen the community and to construct peace in post-conflict Libertad: 1) the revitalization of traditional chants and games in funerary-wake rituals, an activity intended to stimulate communal cooperation and accompany mourning families; and 2) the development of a local music collective, Afro-Música, that aims at increasing intergenerational dialogue and reviving musical practice through a fusion of traditional bullerengue and rap musics. In this case, as in others (Pettan 2008: 92-96), local leaders use collective musical practices as a means for building peace by managing cultural resources in ways that intend to empower community members, and to create sites in which they work, socialize, and make music together.

In relation to these cases, throughout this dissertation three related concepts appear frequently and overlap partially in relation to the post-conflict music programs co-managed

by victim communities and the government in Libertad: peacebuilding, collective reparation, and communal rehabilitation. All three concepts relate to ideas of reinvigorating social cohesion, community construction, and social sustainability after a period of disruption, but each refers to a different process. This way, while the ideas of peacebuilding, collective reparation, and communal rehabilitation are related to each other, each one belongs to its own realm, has its own scope, and details a distinctive aspect of the social reconstruction process in post-conflict societies.

Liberteño community members, for example, frame music in Libertad as an emancipatory and transformative practice with creative, nonviolent, and socially cohesive potential; these ideas resonate with core concepts of of peacebuilding theories proposed by scholars such as Johan Galtung (2000: 10-24, 2008: 58). Cases of collective musical practice in Libertad, such as *bullenrap* or funerary-wake song-games, illustrate the interrelation between strong local leadership, institutional initiatives that emphasize participation, and the endurance and creative resilience of local artists and culture specialists. This process is oriented towards resolving tensions in the local society as well as preventing future conflict. The current program to revive musical and cultural practices runs in parallel to a grassroots educational project that caters to children in the community, with music lessons several times a week and occasional performance opportunities.

Collective reparation, for instance, is a concept that comes from international law and is a judicial mechanism designed to address victims after a conflict has ended (Rosenfeld 2010). In Colombia, the term “collective reparation” is used by government agencies and in civil society to refer to post-conflict programs for victims of the internal armed conflict that attempt to address the damage caused by the violence of the armed

actors involved in this domestic warfare. As defined in the Justice and Peace Law (975/2005) and the Victims' Law (1448/2014), collective reparation refers to five obligatory measures: 1) the restitution of lost goods and rights; 2) economic compensation; 3) communal rehabilitation; 4) providing victims with dignity and satisfaction; and 5) guaranteeing the non-repetition of violent and victimizing actions in the future (IOM 2012a: 27-41). Collective reparation involves benefits conferred on a collectivity to repair collective damages that are the consequence of the violation of international laws (Rosenfeld 2010, OIM 2012a). Collectivities that are the subject of collective reparation are called Sujetos Colectivos de Reparación (Collective Reparation Subjects). These reparation processes are managed by the Unit for the Attention and Integral Reparation of Victims—the Victims Unit—which is an official government agency directly under the President's Office, in charge of managing the Registro Nacional de Víctimas (National Victims Registry) as well as all programs related to victims of the armed conflict.

These five reparation measures respond to specific areas that together build the *ruta de reparación integral* (integral reparation route), which is designed for all victims of the Colombian internal armed conflict. While some measures focus more on material and economic issues (such as providing monetary compensation and the restitution of land and goods), others aim at providing security or symbolic reparation.

Communal rehabilitation is another measure that consists of "strategies, programs and actions of a judicial, medical, psychological and social character, oriented towards reestablishing the physical and psychosocial conditions of the victims" (Victims Unit 2015: 2). The national communal rehabilitation strategy at the Victims Unit is called the Entrelazando (Interlacing) Program, which refers to a process that operates through local

leaders called *tejedores* (weavers), who lead communal activities locally and meet periodically with *entrelazadores* (interlacers) from the Victims Unit. The use of terms such as "interlacers" and "weavers" points to a strategy of constructing horizontal ties through overlapping membership in various bureaucratic and social networks that involve work on issues of communal development.

Local Histories, Social Capital, Creative Resilience, and Participatory Processes

I argue that current communal music projects in Libertad, which are intended as a peacebuilding practice with transformative potential, are playing an important role in the social integration of the community. These projects have had an impact not just on the recovery of traditional cultural practices, but also on articulating processes of conflict transformation and the rehabilitation of social cohesion. I believe this dynamism in the Libertad case stems from four factors:

1. The historical and sociocultural roles of festive and participatory musics in Afro-Colombian societies, including Libertad, as people have used these musics as a tool for resistance, transformation, and community building for centuries;
2. The existence of multiple levels of social capital related to music practices (embodied in local music organizations that are linked to the larger reparation plan), to other local organizations, to initiatives of the government at all levels, and to national and international NGOs;
3. The resilience of a group of Liberteño musicians and artists who have consciously managed their cultural resources to create works that relate not only to local musical traditions but also to contemporary expressions such as hip-hop; and

4. The structure of institutional programs that sometimes facilitate frameworks for community participation and enable local leaders, in collaboration with government officials, to identify local needs and design actions to solve them.

Recognizing that music practices in Libertad have strengthened social networks for generations, I explore how musical activities and participation are coordinated by music stakeholders and CRP officials. I argue that using music as a means of generating social cohesion is not only a recent practice, co-designed by community leaders and hegemonic institutions, but also a traditional form of sociocultural expression oriented towards bringing people together through the celebration of local heritage and by empowering community members to develop local projects. People in the black Atlantic have historically used music as a common strategy to renegotiate power, assert political agendas, and adapt to changing environments (Monson 2004). The emancipatory capacity of some African-descendent musical practices—by which I mean their potential to transform social reality into more peaceful and democratic conditions—has historically existed in tension with the agendas of hegemonic groups (Wade 2000, Guss 2000, Feldman 2006, Moore 2006, among others).

The history of the Colombian-Caribbean region also shows Afro-Colombian musical practices as having long served as mechanisms for social integration, building identities, solidifying social relationships, and creating spaces for resistance to adversity (Birenbaum 2009, Wade 2002, Bermúdez 1994). These musical practices have contributed to such processes through highly participatory performance contexts that blur performer/audience binaries; through intensive use of public spaces, generating territorial

markers around musical activities; and by framing important social occasions through collective music and dance practices: through social integration, festivity and joy.

Liberteño community members embrace discourses of nostalgia and resistance when discussing Afro-Colombian traditional musics, resonating with scholarly narratives about the construction of *afrocolombianidad* ("African-Colombianity") (Wade 2002, De Friedemann 1990, Wade 2000, Whitten and Torres 1998). Studies addressing these issues, though, usually lack grounded discussions of black music performance as a practical (rather than only discursive) means for social change (Gilroy 1993, Feldman 2006, Guss 2000).

Because public performances of these musics have been used to highlight important events and have served as organizational structures and spaces for consolidating communal ties, political authorities have sometimes viewed them as threatening (Escobar 1985, cf. Sanchez 2009) and as a challenge to the systemically racist and marginalizing nature of the governments in Colombia (Rojas 2013: 55-83). These cultural resources have enabled Afro-Colombians to engage as a more unified agent (albeit still marginal) with more powerful groups, such as colonial authorities in the past and the Colombian state in more recent times.

If creativity is stifled and artistic resilience is not dynamic, however, relevant historical processes or current strong social capital are not enough to frame music practices as a peacebuilding initiative. In the case of Libertad, it is the music band and collective Afro-Música, under the leadership of Luis Miguel Caraballo (also known as Ralam) and Isabel Martínez (known as Chabelo) that has not only been resilient but also able to build the social capital necessary to push forward a local music project. After the occupation,

music activity in Libertad was very scarce until this group of young singers and songwriters developed bullenrap, a new form of musical expression that blends hip-hop and bullerengue musics. Their project embraces the mission of recovering local musical traditions, while maintaining the hip-hop that young people like, and it includes *cultura* lyrics and topics related to folklore and local traditions.

This newly created local form of music not only aims at recreating the participatory performance framework of traditional bullerengue, with local drum-and-chant musical expresisons on the streets on a regular basis, but is also guided by a pedagogical strategy of teaching drums and songwriting skills to local children. The members of Afro-Música strategically choose which musical elements to include in their music, be they from bullerengue or rap musics, depending on their specific goal. For example: they include the traditional drums, which allow them to create a rhythm and to be mobile around town. But they also include rap lyrics and vocal techniques for their verses with the aim of appealing to the younger generations. The choruses of their pieces, nonetheless, are from bullerengue songs, with the idea that through hip-hop, younger community members will slowly start incorporating bullerengue melodies into their lives.

This successful community music project in Libertad, conducted by Isabel Martínez and Afro-Música with support from organizations at different levels, has enabled younger leaders to emerge, thus sparking newer forms of multilevel social capital. However, it is the artistic and social talent of this group of young locals, in addition to the quality of their carefully tailored craft, that generates frameworks of empathy where community members share a common ground. The creative resilience of Liberteño musicians addresses the fragility of intergenerational relations within the community by allowing the younger

leadership to voice its needs and concerns and participate more directly in local governance processes, such as the local Collective Reparation Plan.

The case of Libertad also evidences the impact that conscious processes of participatory development can have on proactive groups and communities. Due to the participatory nature of the CRP design process, it was possible to include programs that juxtapose the recovery of traditional musics and other traditional expressive practices with the rehabilitation of intergenerational relationships. However, the implementation of these programs has not always achieved the same drive for participatory processes as its design phase did; thus many institutional actions still embrace paternalistic and assistentialist approaches. Nonetheless, thanks to the windows of participation—spaces that are sometimes present in the design of programs or that are advocated for by the community—cultural processes in Libertad have had significant visibility and have been able to obtain institutional support, although in numbers the support pales in comparison to infrastructure and economic development programs.

Music and Peacebuilding: A Prism with Several Surfaces

This dissertation builds on theories and methods from the anthropology of music and ethnomusicology as well as the literature on peace studies, including theories related to issues such as the politics of identity, postmodern narratives of tradition, power relations between dominant and subaltern groups, the politics of affect, and processes of community-building. Scholars in the anthropology of music and ethnomusicology have productively theorized about the roles, structures, and meanings of music in society and culture. More recently they have also begun to address the roles of musical culture in

violent conflict and peacebuilding scenarios (O'Connell and Castelo-Branco 2010, Araujo 2006, McDonald 2009, McDowell 2000).

I believe that an ethnomusicological approach—by which I mean scholarship about music based on ethnographic methods, which sees music as embedded in its sociocultural and historical context and which analyzes it not only as musical sound but also as discourse, symbol, and practice, among other perspectives—contains the necessary tools to grasp the complexity of the phenomena at hand. Peacebuilding is a profoundly reflexive practice that entails both discussion and negotiation of aspects of specific social groups that are completely shaped by their own history, culture, and societal conditions. Therefore, it is fundamental to address the case I will present in the following chapters with an approach that has the toolkit to engage in discussions about music and cultural diversity, local histories, identity politics, public policy, and war, while still accounting for music as an artistic, expressive, and creative practice.

The 2010 edited volume *Music and Conflict*, compiled by ethnomusicologists John Morgan O'Connell and Salwa El-Shawan Castelo Branco, is an innovative publication in the field, dealing with a diverse range of issues related to music and conflict. Throughout its six sections, the authors contribute to varying discussions related to music: performance representations in times of war in Kosovo (Sugarman 2010) and in the Azerbaijani-Armenian region (Naroditskaya 2010); music as a unifying force in the context of tension between dissonant neighboring nationalities, both in the demilitarized zone between the North and South Koreas (Howard 2010) and between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland (Cooper 2010); music as representation and communication in the context of forced migration of indigenous peoples in Brazil (Seeger 2010) and countries that

receive refugees from many nations such as Uganda (Reyes 2010); music and its relation to censorship in the Muslim world, in Persian countries (Beeman 2010), and in Indonesia (Rasmussen 2010); applied ethnomusicology and conflict resolution initiatives among Roma people in Europe in the context of post Balkan-war in former Yugoslavia (Pettan 2010) and neo-Nazi violence in Germany (Sweers 2010); and the issue of music and the construction of symbolism in the context of disempowered communities, approached from an applied focus in Brazil (Araujo and Grupo Musicultura 2010) and a theoretical one in the United States (Blum 2010). In this volume, Pettan introduces an idea that crosscuts concepts raised throughout the entire book and which is visible in the order of presentation of the chapters: the concept of a war-peace continuum, which I will discuss further in Chapter Five.

Some scholars have persuasively argued that music plays an important role in strengthening communal ties in suburban ethnic-based communities (Cohen 1993), as a strategy for creating spaces for intercultural dialogue (Pettan 2010a and 2010b, Helbig 2008), and for raising awareness of social and political issues through performative protest (Madison 2010, Garlough 2008). Some ethnomusicologists and Latin Americanist anthropologists have also viewed local cultural practices as mechanisms for enforcing ethnic rights in conflict situations (Impey 2002, Hale 2006, Speed 2008, Aparicio and Blaser 2008). However, none of these studies focus on the mechanisms by which music performance, collective action, and empathy have the potential to enable grassroots communal rehabilitation in post-conflict situations.

Ethnomusicologists such as Angela Impey, David McDonald, Svanibor Pettan, John Morgan O'Connell, Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco, and Samuel Araujo (among

others) have worked to consolidate an area of study that focuses on musical cultures in contexts where societies have been strongly impacted by recent or current violent conflict. But I am unaware of any studies that have explored local cultural revivals as strategically designed, participatory, communal, peacebuilding initiatives, how these processes interact with national-level programs and policies, how local beliefs and historical and social contexts contribute to the emancipatory nature of music practices, and how the role of empowered leaders that can build strong, multi-level networks can play a role in communal rehabilitation and post-conflict alleviation. Thus, my approach broadens these areas of inquiry by proposing theories and methods for analyzing how the combination of local histories, current networks of associativity (local leadership and organizations), the resilient creativity of musicians, and the effective use of participatory windows in institutional programs have the potential to address the reconstruction of communal ties through affect and empathy.

Photo 4. Isabel Martínez playing song-games at a funerary wake in Libertad.

In this research, I view music as a technique to reconstruct mutual trust within the community of Libertad, as well as a form of social capital used to reconstruct the networks of neighbor interactions, cooperation, and solidarity. In so doing, I draw on concepts and theories from peacebuilding and development fields. Peacebuilding, as field of research and practice, has only recently engaged with music as a conflict transformation practice (Grant et al. 2010). Much of the current practice in peacebuilding programs currently sees music primarily through a music-therapy paradigm, not always accounting for complex systemic views of music as a human phenomenon deeply entangled with history and social practice. A recent edited volume by Olivier Urbain (2008) compiles fifteen cases that directly engage with music as tool for conflict transformation. In that compilation, music is mostly understood in one of several modes: as relevant for peacebuilding because it creates empathy and common ground (Lawrence 2008, Galtung 2008); as a tool for inter-cultural understanding (Boyce-Tillman 2008) that also can be intended for unpeaceful purposes (Kent 2008); for reconciliation or mobilization through discourse and narrative (Gray 2008, Abi-Ezzi 2008, Whitehead 2008); as a therapeutic healing practice (Jordanger 2008, López Vinader 2008, Skyllstad 2008); and as a practical tool for survival (Palieri 2008) or symbolic reinterpretation (Urbain 2008b) in situations of conflict. However, this publication, as well as other related literature, does not rely primarily on an ethnographic approach to research in order to understand the intricacies and qualitative depth of music practices within specific cultural contexts and embedded in their own histories and social environments, such as the CRP in Libertad.

The Liberteño musical practices I analyze in this dissertation are highly resilient and responsive to change. They are collective and nonviolent, and they create frameworks

for empathy. These are all core aspects of peacebuilding practices as envisioned by field pioneer Johan Galtung in his seminal work *Conflict Transformation by Peaceful Means* (Galtung 2000). Some scholars criticized his work for what they considered to be a simplistic approach to empathy, which he saw as "the capacity for deep understanding, cognitively and emotionally, of the Other, of the logic driving that party," and the double capacity of both resisting engaging in violent action and proactively seeking nonviolent strategies to transform conflict (Galtung 2000: 91). In his perspective, creativity completes the empathy-creativity-nonviolence triangle, which is basic to what he called "peace practice" or the action of engaging with both parties to transform conflict. Galtung, though, laid out work significant to understanding how empathy can generate a path towards peacebuilding and reconciliation. People's beliefs in music's empathetic capabilities can help connect people with one another, making some music practices strategic, effective community-building tools (Urbain 2008:4). In the Libertad case, these expressions and their processes are specifically designed to tackle complex social issues related to local people. The clear intentionality and sense of purpose underlying these projects in Libertad, as well as the strategic use of cultural resources (for instance, local bullerengue fusions with hip-hop), resonate with ideas within the realm of peacebuilding initiatives (Galtung 2008).

The governance process of the CRP is a key place to investigate how these practices, and their related activities, can function as loci for the reproduction of what theorists such as Eduardo S. Brondizio, Elinor Ostrom, and Oran R. Young call "multilevel social capital." They argue that multilevel social capital is fundamental in creating strong

networks of governance within the multilevel structure of resource-use governance systems. For them, this kind of social connections are fundamental in

> the role of institutions in facilitating cross-level environmental governance as an important form of social capital that is essential for the long-term protection of ecosystems and the well-being of different populations.… Institutions facilitating cross-level environmental governance become an important form of social capital. (Brondizio, Ostrom, and Young 2009: 255)

The notion of social capital, understood as levels of social cohesion, networking, association, trust building and cooperation within a social group, helps explain how these processes work (Putnam 2001; Lochner et al. 1999; Grootaert and Van Bastelaer 2002). Social capital is also a useful concept for analyzing the role of music within the CRP organizational context, a governmental and post-conflict development program.

Current practice in fields related to the arts and development have based their approaches on specific assumptions about music, assumptions that directly affect policymaking and program design. I will reduce their main lines of thought and practice to two basic paradigms: a *developmentalist* approach and a *culturalist* approach. The developmentalist approach is by far the most prevalent. It tends to assumes that there are universal values and meanings about music that are independent of its historical and sociocultural contexts. It is common to see peacebuilding projects embrace these values as standards to guide the direction of community music projects. They may take the form of cultural entrepreneurship programs that aim at bridging local traditions and the music industry as a form of economic development (Matarasso 1997: 13) or classical-music education programs framed as positive uses of leisure time for youth (Mincultura 2005). Some forms of music therapy see music as decontextualized clinical sound, not accounting for the historical processes and cultural construction of music and music listening (Dunn

2008). In the developmentalist approach, local music practices and traditions are often overlooked, in part because program officials do not understand music as a social practice within particular cultural contexts and, instead, view music as part of either the "fine arts" or the culture industries. Research about arts programs in development studies contributes to understanding the Libertad case by emphasizing, through research in controlled settings, the roles of the arts in constructing citizenship, improving mental health, and generating support networks based on cooperative action (Kay 2000, Guetzkow 2002, Sjollema et al. 2013). This approach is relatively recent, and it argues for the value of qualitative evaluations to assess the contributions of arts in communal settings. This perspective stands in opposition to earlier developmentalist approaches that conceive of the arts as useful only for achieving quantifiable measures of socioeconomic development through, for example, tourism or the culture industries; its qualitative methodologies acknowledge the many contributions of social and cultural capital to socioeconomic development (Matarasso 1996: 1-5).

The culturalist approach, on the other hand, considers music to be a historically shaped, sociocultural practice, with its meanings embedded in social context and shaped through social interaction (Cooley and Barz 2008). Stemming from postmodern approaches to culture and society, some programs that embrace this approach understand music as a multicultural practice and many times aim at collaborative practices with local music cultures to build capacity with stakeholders and identify needs to develop measures to attend these needs. Some state and civil society cultural programs in Caribbean Colombia also try to reproduce social contexts considered "traditional" for social integration, intensified sociability, and joyful interaction, thus enabling dialogue and

problem-solving situations through expressive culture, potentially facilitating the construction of peace and social capital.

Within the logic of the culturalist approach, in the sense that it acknowledges diversity, is the so-called *enfoque diferencial* (differential approach) that is now mandatory in current Colombian public policy. This approach is intended to account for the specific needs and rights of vulnerable and minority groups (indigenous and other ethnic groups, LGBTI populations, women, children, the elderly, and so on). But the differential approach often does not mandate participatory approaches that include members of the local communities, nor does it emphasize research on particular historical and social contexts. Participatory development programs that accompany local musical initiatives remain rare in Colombia and are only now starting to be documented in the scholarship on programs in other parts of the world (for some cases from countries in Africa, see Odunuga 2013, Okpala 2015, Opiyo 2015). A salient example of community-building, participative music projects, the Libertad case exhibits music practices that are strategically tailored to accommodate the specific needs of the community, as I will explain later.

Photo 5. Nicolás Guzmán, Chabelo's husband, working in the backyard.

The Genesis of this Project, Research Methods, and Goals

I developed many of the theories and methods I used in this research while studying anthropology as an undergraduate student in Colombia and as a graduate student at Indiana University, where I concentrated on the study of ethnomusicology and folklore while pursuing a Ph.D. minor in philanthropic studies. The primary topic of this dissertation and the issues pursued within it, however, stemmed from ethnographic research and recording projects I have conducted at various times over the last fourteen years with members of Afro-Colombian communities in the Colombian Caribbean region. In this previous research, I explored topics such as cultural hybridity in music, the institutionalization of musical traditions, public representations of ethnicity, and the music industries—some of which are included within my 2012 master's thesis "From Street Parrandas to Folkloric Festivals: The Institutionalization of Bullerengue Music in the Colombian Urabá Region," as well as other publications.

Although I have conducted much of this work in areas where the existence of conflict and armed actors are an everyday circumstance, this dissertation is the first project in which I directly address the consequences of conflict, the specific needs of the victims of conflict, and the impact of local arts, music and other collective expressive practices related to local cultures within peacebuilding initiatives and projects. I undertook two pre-dissertation research trips to Libertad to become more familiar with the local situation and to seek the advice of local musicians and cultural leaders regarding issues they believed important to address. In 2014 I volunteered at the "1st Ecological Bullerengue and Tambora Festival for Peace in Libertad," where I assisted in the event's production while conducting preliminary dissertation research and performing with local musicians. In

January 2015, I returned to reestablish contact with key stakeholders in the area and assess the feasibility of my project.

The main stakeholders with whom I worked are people directly engaged with the CRP, including: 1) local traditional musicians, particularly elderly people from rural areas; 2) younger musicians who previously had tended to perform "popular" musics (such as hip-hop or vallenato) but who began learning about traditional musics because of their activist work; 3) community leaders who have taken up the responsibility for coordinating aspects of the CRP; 4) officials and others involved in the CRP, including NGO and government workers who collaborate on the implementation of the CRP; members these groups tend to be urban, middle-class mestizos who work in Libertad as only one of their designated projects; and, 5) other community members, mostly lower-income Afro-Colombians who work in agricultural activities, small-scale cattle herding or local commerce and who are the target population of the CRP.

Building upon this prior research, I conducted fourteen months of ethnographic fieldwork from October 2015 to November 2016 to gather data related to music, peacebuilding, and collective reparation specifically for this project. I primarily resided in Libertad and in Bogotá, but also visited towns and cities in areas surrounding Libertad, where the same musical traditions exist and which have also been affected by conflict. During fieldwork in Bogotá, where the main headquarters of government agencies and participating NGOs are located, I talked with government officials and NGO personnel working at different levels who do work in Libertad. I primarily used semi-structured interviews to learn about their viewpoints and attitudes towards the CRP as well as the successes and challenges they see. I also inquired about other national reparation plans,

their perceptions of Afro-Colombian culture and its potential for community rehabilitation, and their concepts of "local culture" and "tradition" more generally.

My primary research methods while doing fieldwork in Libertad were participant observation, ethnographic interviews, and documentation. I gathered data from stakeholders in the reparation plan, including community musicians, other artists and culture specialists, community leaders, government officials, and so on. I recorded audio during ethnographic interviews and focus groups meetings with key participants in the process. With them, I discussed the main assumptions of the program and the ways community members related to it as well as broader issues such as their views of cooperation and solidarity as values and what they thought about using musical practices as a local peacebuilding initiative. We also talked about the state of local cultural traditions and their roles in contemporary Libertad. I asked participants about their perceptions of local organizational activity, leadership, and the relationships between local musicians and CRP initiatives. These data have provided valuable information about how people identify with musical practices and cultural events related to traditional culture, and the relationship of these activities with peacebuilding processes. I paid special attention to musicians, other culture specialists, and their activities. I inquired about the participation of other community members and asked about historical changes people noticed in relation to the idea of traditional music as a vehicle for social bonding.

In Libertad, in addition to daily activities that involved musical practices, such as music lessons and band rehearsals, I also documented the preparation for and celebration of local festivals and activities that involved music performance, such as the Day of All Souls, the anniversary of Cartagena's Independence, Holy Week, the commemoration of

Libertad's liberation, and several funerary wakes. I also worked extensively with the main music collectives in Libertad, documenting their rehearsals, performances, grant-writing sessions, meetings, private musical celebrations, parades, and recording sessions. I also traveled with the local band Afro-Musica, accompanying them to tours through many Colombian cities.

Libertad is a site where traditional musical practices are being strategically structured and reshaped as part of a holistic development plan to make amends to victims of the armed conflict. It is an ideal place to analyze the interplay of narratives and practices of music and peacebuilding in multicultural, post-conflict, development, and public policy settings. And, as my research reveals, there are complex and multilayered concepts of ethnicity, tradition, and culture at work within the region and within the CRP. Thus, I documented the ways and contexts in which participants negotiate diverse concepts of "local culture" and put them into practice as CRP activities.

I have approached this research in a way that intends to contribute to a hybrid space in which the ethnography of music connects with the concerns of program implementation methods and practices. This approach is more common in the anthropology of policy and activist anthropology, which have been increasingly involved in program implementation since the 1990s (Ervin 2000, Martinez 2008), than it is in ethnomusicology, where these issues are only now starting to be discussed. Newer approaches in applied and activist ethnographies, which criticize what scholars such as Greenwood, Aparicio, and Blaser call the "speculative" (Greenwood 2008) and "authoritative" (Aparicio and Blaser 2008) nature of cultural critique, provide alternatives that offer a useful take on the study of culture, social relations, and power issues. These alternative approaches advocate for strengthening

applied methodologies, considering them critical to the building of theory and critique (Hale 2006, 2008).

Moving in those directions, I also understand ethnographic research as a critical and activist enterprise, one that involves collaborating with local music projects, accompanying and supporting their work and peacebuilding agendas while producing critical scholarship about them. As part of this endeavor, I not only documented local music projects, I also sometimes participated in them, supporting their initiatives, sharing my materials, and teaching music lessons when requested—aspects of the research process that will be more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 4. Thus, I conducted this project with the intention of producing knowledge that can be applied to the alleviation of the social problems in the community of Libertad. I also aim to describe and assess the methodologies of local initiatives so that they might be adjusted and utilized in other parts of Colombia (or the world) where similar processes of resilience and negotiation of local cultures take place between local communities and program officials in post-conflict and peacebuilding contexts. Simultaneously, my analysis of this one case study aims to contribute to the construction of theories in peace studies, applied anthropology, and applied ethnomusicology.

Photo 6. *Liberteño* children swimming at El Chaqui, a fresh water stream where locals bathe and do laundry.

Structure of the Dissertation

In the following chapters, I will examine the ways in which these four core concepts—local histories, social capital, creative resilience, and participatory institutional accompaniment—shape the ways music practices are being framed as part of the peacebuilding efforts in the village of Libertad. Chapter 2 discusses the recent history of the town and, in particular, the historical roles played by cultural practices such as funerary-wake song-games in creating social cohesion. The chapter then goes on to examine the impact of the paramilitary occupation of the territory. Chapter 3 analyzes the process of the liberation of the community of Libertad, exploring how collective action initiatives that have been a historical feature of Liberteño culture have also permeated this process as well as the ways that creating social capital around music practices transforms existing social hierarchies. Chapter 4 closes this triad by exploring the idea of "local tradition" and how creative resilience generates empathy and nonviolent strategies for

conflict resolution. While focusing on the projects and performances of Afro-Música, in this chapter I also discuss my role in Libertad as an activist ethnomusicologist and the roles and impacts of my participation in these local music projects.

Chapters 5 and 6 complement this work with overarching discussions about larger issues related to music and peacebuilding. Chapter 5 focuses on the ways music as culture is understood in peacebuilding from the perspective of, on one hand, rural, Caribbean, Afro-Colombian victims of the armed conflict, and, on the other, urban, Andean, upper middle-class program officials who design and run collective reparation plans. Here, I expand the critique presented in this introduction on developmentalist and culturalist music and peacebuilding approaches, using as examples comparative cases in Colombia. A discussion about transitional justice, empowerment through performance, and gender rights is the core of Chapter 6, which details how an organized group of female leaders were able to put Libertad's chief aggressor behind bars for decades. I conclude this dissertation with a brief discussion of the problematic nature of writing that unintentionally constructs an "ethnographic present," following which is a brief update on Liberteño musicians and music projects that continued after I finished my ethnographic research—and that will continue after this dissertation is complete.

CHAPTER 2

FUNERARY WAKES AND EXPRESSIVE CULTURE IN LIBERTAD: BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER THE PARAMILITARY OCCUPATION

A Promise to Pay: Trust, Ritual, and Social Cohesion in Funerary Wakes

Vicente Porto's house in Libertad was surrounded by people when I got there on a night in March 2016. With me were two members of the local music project Afro-Música en los Montes de María (Afro-Música or AFM). Most of the approximately two hundred people attending the wake at Vincente's house were sitting on plastic chairs in front of the house, while others, including many children, roamed around talking and hanging out. A couple of young women from the house walked around with trays of small coffee cups, offering them to people. I could see other members of AFM arriving, and we all gathered in a small group. We greeted our leader for the night, traditional elder singer (*cantaora*) Isabel Martínez "Chabelo," who responded to our greeting with a big smile. She asked if we were ready and, as we nodded, she walked us through the crowd and into the living room of the one-story adobe house. "*Permiso!*" ("Excuse us!"), she said, as we walked in.

The living room was about twenty-feet wide by fifteen-feet long, which was enough space for an altar with its images and candles, the coffin, and more than fifteen people sitting nearby. Vicente's close relatives were hosting the "present-body" (*cuerpo presente*) night, part of the funerary-wake ritual that was honoring a renowned community member who had passed away two days earlier. Vincente was one of the last elders in the community who maitained the specialized knowledge of traditional funerary-wake games, a custom practiced by Afro-Colombian people in this region. Chabelo and a group of

young men and women from AFM gathered around the coffin holding wooden staffs with which they were gently but rhythmically hitting the dirt floor at a slow tempo (~60 bpm). To that beat and with one hand on the coffin, Chabelo started singing a tearful bullerengue-style lament with verses she had written for Vicente Porto, calling the attention of the people present. The young accompanists watched her perform while they marked the beat with the staffs and responded occasional chorus lines:

Aquí estoy Vicente Porto	Here I am, Vicente Porto
Aquí te vine a pagá	Here I am going to pay you.
Te paga Isabel Martínez	It's Isabel Martínez paying you
En el pueblo de Libertad	In the town of Libertad.
Se acabó Vicente Porto	Vicente Porto is over
Lo vinimo' a 'compañar	And we came to accompany him.
Se acabó Vicente Porto	Vicente Porto is over
Lo vinimo'a 'compañar (coro)	*And we came to accompany him. (chorus)*
Se acabó Vicente Porto	Vicente Porto is over
Lo vinimo'a 'compañar	*And we came to accompany him.*
Hombre que le gusta el juego	This man really liked games
Y aquí lo vamo' a jugá	And here we are going to play.
Hombre, le gustaba el juego	This man really liked games
Y aquí lo vamo' a jugá	*And here we are going to play.*

The tune continued for a few minutes. Chabelo improvised verses, and the altar's candles highlighted her grave expression while revealing a multitude of people trying to hear the songs and see the games from behind the small windows of the house. Chabelo and Vicente were close friends. A few weeks earlier, on his deathbed, Vincente made Chabelo promise him that she would play the traditional games at his wake. Chabelo invited her colleagues from Afro-Musica, to back her up, and me, to record the event. Keeping her promise, she sang two more songs from the traditional wake games: "A pilá el arró" (Let's Mill the Rice) and "La marucha." Inside the house, full choreography was not possible, so players moderated their movements, performing without moving from their positions, consistently responding the chorus. In the third game, "El café" (The Coffee),

Chabelo organized the players in a line and led them outside the house, through the now much larger crowd, and onto the street. The players were jumping, singing, and enacting movements she called out, completely transforming the ambience and extending the festive atmosphere of the games to all the attendees. A minute or two later, a second group of people started playing "El café" as well; the games multiplied, and everyone became engaged either playing or watchingand laughing.[9] The games marked a ritual transformation, a key process on that important night before the burial that marked the official beginning of the *novena* (nine nights) in the funerary wake of local cultural leader Vicente Porto.

After around half an hour of playing "El café" at Vicente's house, the two main groups of players started wandering into neighboring streets, chanting and playing without stopping, calling up the neighbors and taking over the public space with their performance. "El café" consists of a line of people who hold the waist of the person in front of them, while the head of the line holds a branch or burning brand and sings short lines that call for both the actions of the players and an appropriate choral response. The line constantly and rhythmically moves forward, curving like a snake, and marches to the beat of the song. If the players make mistakes or the head of the line reaches the tail, the head person can lightely strike the player with the branch (or, when holding a fire brand, simulate that he/she is doing that). It is a very entertaining situation, and attendees tend to focus on the games, as they comment, laugh, and/or tease each other about participating.

This wake lasted the traditional nine nights (*novena*), in addition to the evening on which the body is presented. Due to sickness, I missed Vicente's last night, which is

[9] Highlights from this moment can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tEBTZz8fzI.

usually the most heavily attended one, along with the *cuerpo presente* (literally, present body) night and the first night. For weeks, adults and elders commented how great this event had been, saying that it resembled the wakes of "the past times" (*los tiempos de antes*). Song-games were played, tales were told, domino matches and card games crowded the tables. People felt enthusiastic and created a week-and-a-half long space of intensified social interaction in the evening. In Libertad, funerary wakes are not restricted to close family members, but are a matter of interest to the whole community. Usually, the status of the deceased and how beloved s/he was determine the size of the attending crowd. Although not everyone attends, hundreds of people do and even more people talk about the events. People go to these events with multiple purposes, including accompanying family members, mourning the deceased, or enjoying opportunities for intensified socializing, among others. Isabel Martínez "Chabelo" attended in part because she had promised to do so and because she believes that such ritual events are central to building trust and social cohesion within her community.

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In the second half of the twentieth century, Libertad was relatively well-known in the region in part because of its cultural expressions, including its traditional musics. Historically, practices such as these funerary-wake rituals and bullerengue music and dance performances brought members of the community together to mark important events and to socialize—to form and maintain a community. The social processes made possible through the powerful performance frameworks of Afro-Colombian cultural expressions provided spaces for social integration, building empathy (which is often expressed by community members through the idea of *compartir*, or "sharing," which entails sharing

moods and emtions, no just time and space), and also creating a common-ground. They constituted prime examples of what political scientist Mark Mattern calls a communicative arena, an arena through which the commonalities and bonds of community can be formed and maintained—and which can result in collective action (Mattern 1998).

In 1997, illegal right wing paramilitary armies, led by Marco Tulio Pérez Guzmán ("El Oso"), forcibly took over the territory, violently abusing and oppressing the local population. As part of their strategy of social control, the occupiers targeted public events and cultural practices because they considered them potentially threatening to their regime, precisely because Afro-Colombian expressive cultural traditions had historically facilitated social cohesion and provided frameworks for resistance. Thus, during the eight years that the paramilitaries occupied Libertad, they curtailed or banned most of these social events. I argue that this disruption in the continuity of cultural expressions led not only to a silenced town, a town without traditional music and festive contexts, but also to a decrease in the intensity of social interaction and cooperative relations between community members. When the paramilitaries left, the discontinuation of funerary-wake rituals and collective musical practices had left its mark on the town. Some local leaders, however, aware of the sociocultural relevance of these practices, had resisted the paramilitary threat and continued practicing them despite obvious risks. These leaders are today key characters in the local process of collective reparation.

In this chapter, I will briefly outline the history of Afro-Colombians in the Caribbean region of Colombia. I will also discuss the development of Afro-Colombian cultural traditions in relation to issues of community formation, resistance, and resilience, and I will explore the nature and roles of funerary traditions in Libertad. Funerary wakes

and their related practices have been a historically relevant mechanism for social cohesion in these communities. Here, I argue that funerary-wake song-games in Libertad are an example of how these cultural practices have played an important role in keeping Afro-Colombian people together and united. I also argue that this cohesive function was what led to their prohibition by the paramilitary armies in the late 1990s. Currently, these traditional practices are being revived by local cultural leaders who, aware of their relevance, make efforts to perpetuate these practices and transmit them to younger generations.

Photo 7. Coco, Vicente Porto's daughter, leading the funerary-wake song-games at her father's wake.

The Afro-Colombian Caribbean Region

The Caribbean region of Colombia has the largest Afro-Colombian population, followed by the Pacific region (DANE 2005). Official data set the percentage of Afro-Colombian population at around 10% of the national total, while other scholars and experts estimate that it is somewhere between 10% to 40%, depending on how the idea of "Afro-Colombian" is constructed (Arocha 1999). The Caribbean region comprises the northern coast, savannahs and small mountain ranges, the northern Magdalena and Cauca river

valleys, as well as oceanic territories in the Caribbean, including major archipelagos such as San Andres, Providencia, and Santa Catalina. This mainly agricultural region was the entrance point of the Spanish colonizers to the territory that became Colombia in the sixteenth century. The Province of Cartagena became a main colonial administrative center, becoming known as an important African and Afro-Colombian slave market that supplied slaves to the surrounding regions (Gutiérrez 1987). Because of their strong presence, black West African customs and expressions strongly marked the development of Colombian Caribbean culture.

Large agricultural production projects were developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These projects exploited rich lands primarily by depending on work done by slaves. It became a key farming region, part of what was then called the New Granada, a large colonial territory of the Spanish crown that included Colombia, Panamá, Ecuador, and Venezuela (Ángel 2001). After independence and a series of civil wars during the nineteenth century, the Caribbean Coast became the entrance of modernity to the nation beginning in the latter part of the century, with the coastal city of Barranquilla spearheading industrialization and international commerce through aviation and navigation on the Magdalena River. After the United States-driven secession of Panama in 1903 and the eventual construction of the Panama Canal (inaugurated in 1914), the Colombian Pacific port of Buenaventura inherited the bulk of the international trade, thus diminishing Barranquilla's relevance as cosmopolitan center. Inner Andean cities, such as Medellin and Bogotá took over that role (National Museum of Colombia 2008).

The region's population was transformed through complex processes of miscegenation between indigenous groups, European colonizers (mainly Spanish), and

black West Africans brought to the New World as slaves beginning in the sixteenth century. Even though a racially categorized social pyramid determined people's social standing during colonial times, after independence in the early nineteenth century, the dominant discourses about Colombian identity emphasized the idea of *mestizaje* as foundational to the core of the "Colombian folk" (*pueblo colombiano*). This idealized construction deemed profound racial mixing, in which discernible "original traits" could not be traced, as core in the construction of national identity. White and *criollo* elites, who had inherited power from the Spanish, designed this idea to legitimate their own racial mixes–whiter than the rest–with tacit narratives of "whitening" (*blanqueamiento*) to marginalize others and construct a national discourse that served their own agendas (Santamaría 2006, Wade 2000: 30-52).

In practice, Colombia is highly multicultural nation with around seventy government-recognized ethnic groups and languages. Even though the Caribbean region could have been an idealized place where this constructed idea of *mestizaje* happened (since most of the population is highly mixed), it tends to be associated with a strong African heritage (De Friedemann 1990, Wade 2000: 43). This early discourse of *mestizaje*, and its whitening agenda, rendered the predominance of Afro-Colombian traits in many regions of Colombia invisible and denied people bearing these traits the status of "proper" Colombians. Black West African cultural elements are salient in many instances of Caribbean culture, and areas of almost exclusively black population can be found in several provinces of the Colombian Caribbean. In these areas, marks of Afro-Colombian culture permeate the current lives of people to varying degrees. However, the regional elites remain white, a process explained by the consequences of the processes of

colonialism and independence and the perpetuation of race and class privilege transferred from the Spanish to their New World-born descendants, historically called *Criollos*, who succeeded in rebelling against them.

Photo 8. Drying rice after the harvest.

Cabildos and Palenques: Co-option, Cultural Resistance, and Resilience

The lives of African-descendants in colonial Colombia revolved around slavery—either in terms of being in it, plotting to escape from it, breaking out and staying away from it, and/or being (re)captured and submitted (back) into it. In this context, two main colonial social formations characterized the development of Afro-Colombian culture: *cabildos* and *palenques*. The cabildos were part of a social structure that originated in Seville and was managed by the Spanish crown; they were meant to keep African slaves in administrative units to guarantee their productivity and to prevent subversion. These structures were implemented throughout the Hispanic New World, including New Granada, becoming the normative place and symbolic order for black Africans in the Americas (De Friedemann 1990, Castaño 2014).

In New Granada, as in other parts of the continent, the *cabildos de negros* were conceived with the intention of dividing previously formed collectivities. Slaves from diverse ethnic groups, who spoke different languages, were put together in one settlement to encourage ethnic tension and to prevent organization and rebellion (De Friedemann 1990). While this attempt certainly disrupted many aspects of African cultures and made the process of integration among slaves harder, the daily coexistence under the common reality of slavery turned the cabildos into thriving foci of miscegenation and cooperation and made them repositories of a multitude of black West African cultural traits. Designed as administrative units to keep slaves under control, cabildos eventually became mutual-aid societies, resembling parallel West African social structures, partially run by the slaves who learned to use their organizational power to oppose their oppressors and demand concessions (De Friedemann 1993). The cabildos were arguably the initial place where an African drum was played in Colombia; and the people lived there mbraced and perpetuated diverse West African foodways, dances, and religions, amongst whom embodied performance techniques, values, and linguistic characteristics evolved together, and who sparked slave rebellions.

Cimarronaje is the term used in Spanish for "maroonage" and refers to acts of resistance taken by African and Afro-Colombian slaves when they fled from their masters and escaped slavery, either temporarily (to push concessions in their favor) or permanently, to live in one of the nearby *palenques*, or towns of runaway slaves (Castaño 2014). The many palenques that evolved throughout the centuries in the Caribbean region (starting in the sixteenth century, and later other parts of Colombia) became main centers of Afro-Colombian emancipation and cultural development. The ways in which early palenques

emerged and the harsh measures taken by colonial authorities to prevent both emancipation and cimarronaje illustrate that absolute control over the slaves was a dream far from reality for Spanish colonial rulers (Bermúdez 2005: 215-17). *Cimarrones* ("maroons") used to escape in groups, usually to palenque towns where they had friends or family, often deep within the nearby mountains, including the Sierra of Luruaco or the María Mountains. These locations, contained abundant natural resources and were strategic locations for a solid military defense (Castaño 2014).

Because of their autonomy, palenques became core spaces for the resilience and development of Afro-Colombian sociocultural practices, including Creole languages, forms of economy and agriculture, structures of social organization, mythic complexes, religious and expressive practices, drum-and-chant musical practices, ritual dances, and diverse genres of oral literature from jokes and games to tales and riddles (De Friedeman and Patiño 1983). Fluid and resilient by nature, residents of palenques were permanently at war resisting Spanish troupes, and they were often destroyed or dismantled by colonial powers. In those instances, their residents escaped to other palenques, founded new ones, or were recaptured into slavery (Castaño 2014). Within this subversive network of Afro-Colombian resistance, the Palenque de San Basilio stood out as a key center of cimarronaje life. Founded in the late seventeenth century by cimarrones escaping the destruction of other towns, Palenque de San Basilio was the first town in the Americas to have its independence from Europe granted by Royal Decree, in 1713 (Arrázola 1970). It sits close to Libertad in the María Mountains. Today, palenquero culture and the "cultural space" of Palenque de San Basilio have been included in the United Nations Educational, Scientific

and Cultural Organization's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO 2008).

Photo 9. Playing dominos at a funerary wake in Libertad. The altar can be seen in the back.

It is commonplace in scholarship about the Black Atlantic to assert that cultural practices from communities in this region, such as belief systems, rituals, and other forms of expressive cultural practice, have played a key role in how these populations endured slavery and resisted systemic oppression for centuries. Scholars in disciplines such as anthropology, folklore, and ethnomusicology have embarked on large theoretical enterprises to explore and explain how people in the African diaspora articulate cultural expressions within sociopolitical struggles, many times assigning them a determining role in these political processes of self-determination (Gilroy 1993).

While this idea assumes the general existence and constructive role of Africanity in black communities in the Americas, it can also lead to what classic theorists, such as Paul Gilroy, critique as "ethnic-absolutism." This idea entails the assumption that Africanity, or the persistence of African traits in the diaspora, is a mostly seamless and unified

experience all over the Black Atlantic (Gilroy 1993). From a critical anti-essentialist perspective, as proposed by Gilroy, Afro-Colombianity would be a historical phenomenon, specific in its territorial and sociocultural development and, thus, determined by its particularities rather than necessarily by its connection to a larger African diaspora (Gilroy 1993, Monson 2004). However, some theorists also argue that an anti-anti-essentialist perspective is fundamental to understanding the complexity of sociohistorical and cultural processes in the Black Atlantic. From this perspective, scholars acknowledge the constructed nature of cultural identities but are also aware of the tangible consequences of the "technologies of power" utilized in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, which racialized these bodies and identities, putting markers of oppression on black people (Monson 2004: 3). According to this line of thought, African-diasporic identities are continuously being reshaped and reinforced as response to "white supremacist abuses" (C. West in Monson 2004).

The construction of the ideas of *negritud* and *afrocolombianidad* ("blackness" and "Afro-Colombianity") in the scholarly discourse about culture in Colombia has a clearly defined history, which started with the field of Afro-Colombian studies and the work of scholars such as Jaime Arocha, Nina S. De Friedemann, Norman Whitten, Peter Wade, Axel Rojas, and Eduardo Restrepo, among others, starting in the 1960s and 1970s. In this dissertation, I use mostly the term Afro-Colombian, which is how the black Colombians I worked with tend to identify themselves. This is also the official term for this demographic in current Colombian public policy. Throughout most of the twentieth century, the idea of a "Colombian folk" (*pueblo colombiano*) was mostly defined by higher-class intellectuals in the inner-Andean regions of the country, where political and economic powers have

concentrated since colonial times, and where most of the population is whiter than in the rest of the nation. This way, during the first half on the twentieth century, an idealized and supposedly homogeneous concept of "Colombian folk" was constructed by these intellectuals portraying it as a *mestizo* (mixed-race) people built as result of the (unexplored) contributions of European, African, and Indigenous heritage (Ocampo López 1984: 17-24, among others). By doing this, these intellectuals neglected more accurate representations of the cultural diversity within the Colombian territory, which included a variety of racial mixing as well as indigenous groups and Afro-Colombian people.

From the 1940s through 1960s, though, a thriving cultural elite emerged of on the Caribbean coast. Members of this elite not only contributed to national Colombian popular culture, but also helped reshape these ideas of the "Colombian folk" by adding to this dominant narrative the idea that "blackness" (as well as "indigeneity") were visible and part of the narratives of the Colombian nation, although still considered inferior (Wade 2000: 30-46). In his book about the emergence of *música tropical* (tropical music) in Colombia, Peter Wade discusses how the idea of blackness enters newly contructed notions of an imagined Colombian folk. While these representations of blackness were still exoticizing and imposed, serving mostly as mechanisms to make cultural products circulate more, they created an idea that blackness was mostly associated with the Caribbean Coast of Colombia. And while it is true that a lot of the population in Caribbean Colombia consider themselves black, historically, the region with the largest numbers of Afro-Colombian population has been the Pacific Coast of Colombia.

The Pacific Coast, western littoral of the Colombian territory, had been deemed invisible by Colombian state until the 1970s when, inspired by other social movements

occuring in Colombia at the time—such as the farmers movements and the indigenous movements—people from this region organized to claim civic rights from the national state (Restrepo 2002). This social process, named the "Afro-Colombian movement" by scholars such as Eduardo Restrepo, entailed a series of basic demands to the state, which in government documentation about the Pacific called the region "unpopulated" and its territories "vacant" (*baldíos*) (Restrepo 2002: 39-40). The Afro-Colombian movement is characterized by a marked ethnic approach to their causes and claims, demanding cultural, economic, political, and social recognition of the contributions of Afro-Colombians have made to the nation. These contributions were finally acknowledged, after decades of struggle and a constitutional reform (1991), through the Law 70/1997—also known as the "Law of Afro-Colombian Communities"—which enacted national policies to address the Afro-Colombian agenda.

A recognizable history of the dominant ideas about "blackness" and "Afro-Colombianity" can be traced as, first, being identified as abstract racial traits with no particular ties to any region, people, or sociocultural practice; second, as associated with the contributions of Caribbean Colombian black peoples to mainstream popular culture, including music, literature, and other cultural products; and third, as related to the ethnic claims of the national Afro-Colombian movement, which has major representation in the Pacific Coast of Colombia. Therefore, today, when people in Libertad talk about "blackness" or "African-Colombianity," despite being based on the Caribbean, they refer to the idea of Afro-Colombians as an ethnic group with its own logics, systems of belief, forms of socioeconomic production, social organization, artistic and cultural expressions, ritual, and other characteristic of autonomous social groups (Restrepo 1996-97).

Since the arrival of African people to Colombian shores, the histories of Afro-Colombian people have been a series of struggles against dominant social groups prohibiting, contriving, controlling, and co-opting their cultural expressions. There is a well-documented history of how the *bundes* (street dances of Afro-Colombian slaves that involved drums and responsorial chants; these were later also called fandangos) were forbidden by colonial authorities as early as the mid-sixteenth century in the Caribbean region. The persistence of this practice, as well as the continued attempts to ban it even through the late eighteenth century, only show its entrenchment in Colombian Caribbean life (Bermúdez 2005). The practice became legal and encouraged after independence, and Indigenous populations and Afro-Colombians were given space to celebrate their own customs at specific times of the year, such as Carnival, or the Candelaria Virgin celebration on February 2. Bundes and fandangos still exist today, and even though we do not know if they sound the same as they did during colonial times, there is today a myriad of Afro-Colombian local drum-and-chant musical styles that are likely related to some of these older practices.

While not necessarily playing the same roles throughout the Caribbean, local drum-and-chant musics became a central expression of African people and their descendents in the region. According to Gilroy, the centrality of black music stems from the fact that "the self-identity, political culture, and grounded aesthetics that distinguish black communities have often been constructed through their music" (Gilroy 1993: 102). In the same vein, scholars like Alén Rodríguez argue that music is key in Afro-Caribbean identity because it became one of the most generalized regional art forms after the abolition of slavery (Rodríguez 1995: 109-111). However, Caribbean black cultures emerged dynamically and

multiply after the abolition of slavery, which is when the structures of the cabildos began to be perpetuated as mutual-aid societies with their own social structures and forms of political organization. In her book about music and the African diaspora, Ingrid Monson argues that music is a social phenomenon that is central to understanding the interconnection of diverse "culturally valued modes of expression" (Monson 2004: 2). Music is a form through which one can identify success both in articulating resistance and in perpetuating oppression and stereotypes of black people as intuitive and naturally rhythmic, for example (Monson 2004:2-3). At the same time, though, research in Afro-Colombian music history has shown that these practices constantly change and adapt through time as people transform them in relation to newer contexts (Bermúdez 1994).

In Libertad, a specific kind of musical practice evolved: songs to accompany enacted games usually performed by children and adults at funerary wakes. Afro-Colombian funerary wakes are a widespread ritual practice, with some common characteristics nationally and in nearby countries, such as Panama, Ecuador, and Venezuela. However, the role music plays within this ritual practice varies. On the Pacific Coast of Colombia black communities sing a capella choral laments (*alabaos*) in their funerary wakes (Jaramillo 2006), while in Palenque de San Basilio, in the Colombian Caribbean region, the local *lumbalú* drum-and-chant music groups perform *baile de muerto* ("dead's dance") singing in Palenquero creole language (Escalante 1989). And at the funerary wakes in Libertad, music appears as central performance element of the enacted song-games, always musical, that are played at nights during the novena cycle of funerary-wake rituals.

Photo 10. Burial procession of a community member in Libertad.

Afro-Colombian Funerary Wakes: Mourning and Entertainment

Colombia is a multicultural yet still mostly Catholic country, with approximately four out of five people identifying as such (Department of State 2012). In rural Afro-Colombian religious practice, though, there has been great influence of black West African religious traits and spiritual views which have permeated Catholic customs in many regions. Such forms of syncretism fit within the larger strategies of resistance and cultural subversion of Afro-Colombian people, who sometimes secretly imbued Catholic practices with their own spiritual beliefs and meanings. Anthropologists and historians have studied how the beliefs of certain black West African groups brought to Colombia during the mid-

to late-sixteenth century illustrate models that represent an integration of the worlds of humanity and nature, the living and the dead, and time and space (Arocha 1999, Museo Nacional 2008). In this general worldview, passing away means becoming an ancestor, a spiritual guardian that accompanies the living and that influences their lives and forces of nature (Rojas and McDowell 2017).

Incompatible with official Catholic doctrine, authorities oppressed these beliefs and their related practices. Nonetheless, the Afro-Colombian people sometimes strategically disguised them in Catholic forms. In other cases, authorities reluctantly acknowledged these practices as part of the framework of certain Catholic holiday celebrations such as Christmas, patron-saint days, or funerary novenas (Friedman 1996: 80-84). According to traditional Afro-Colombian beliefs, the soul of the deceased takes nine nights to leave the house after the body is buried. Although this belief and its accompanying practice has weakened, a great deal of social and ritual commitment is still expected from the participants to guarantee the successful departure of the ancestor while supporting the mourning family. Wakes are also spaces for entertainment, and the ritual order not only includes praying women (*rezanderas*), who perform vernacular prayers (*rezos*) at specific times, but also storytelling, domino games, card games, and enacted song-games (Rodríguez de Montes 1991, List 1968).

In the 1960s, ethnomusicologist George List conducted fieldwork in several towns near Libertad, documenting funerary wakes and the expressive practices associated with them. In Evitar (in the Department of Bolívar), among other towns, List found that storytelling was a predominant activity during the wakes. In today's Libertad, however, funerary-wake specialists mostly utilize the genre of enacted song-games, conceived of as

the "traditional" form of entertainment for these rituals (List 1965, 1968). These games usually consist of simple call-and-response songs, which are sung alternately between the leader of the game and the group of players, calling for specific actions by the players, and following rules specific to each game.

As John McDowell and I explained in an introduction for an edited volume of George List's work on Afro-Colombian expressive cultural practices at funerary wakes:

> Funerary wakes in the Colombian Caribbean region combine Catholic practice with popular belief [constructing] a liminal space where the soul of the deceased transitions from this world into its eternal rest. These rituals restore the sociocultural order and close the breach between the worlds of the living and the dead. Liberation of the soul from the body is the main cosmological purpose, and it happens smoothly and successfully when relatives and friends gather and stay awake all night, engaging in funerary ritual behavior that alternates between prayer and entertainment, with activities such as games, joke-telling, and storytelling. These activities are conducted for nine nights, constituting a special period called *novena*. (Rojas and McDowell 2017: 7)

The process of a funerary wake starts in Libertad when a community member dies. Women take care of arranging the body, the house, and the altar, while men get the coffin and start preparing the cement tomb at the local graveyard. This way, women in the house hang a large white sheet on one of the main walls of the living room, to which a black cloth cross is stitched on the central upper part. They then adorn a table with another white sheet in front of the cross, light four candles, and set a crucifix with a rosary on top. The candles are to remain lit until they are blown out before dismantling the altar at the end of the ninth night after the final prayer cycle. The rosary that is placed on the altar will later be used by the praying woman to lead the many prayers on the wake nights (Rojas and McDowell 2017: 8). On the back of the table, against the wall, are framed images of three *santos* (saints or saintly figures), as they are called locally: Dr. Saint Joseph Gregory Hernandez, the Virgin of El Carmen, and the Divine Heart of Jesus. The night of the

"body-present" ritual, the coffin is placed in front of the altar and flower arrangements are distributed on it and all over the living room, along with chairs for mourning family members. On the other nights, just the chairs remain in the living room, reserved for closest relatives.

Friends, relatives and acquaintances visit the house, but the intensity of the visits increases at night, which is when the wake sessions begin. The most well-attended nights are the present-body night ritual, as well as the following night, called First Night, in reference to the burial date, and the Last Night (the ninth night after burial). While close family members spend more time inside the house accompanying the altar, other relatives, friends, acquaintances, and community members remain outside of the house, where chairs have been placed for attendees, along with some tables for domino and *truco* (a local card game). I witnessed family members offering sweet dark coffee, hot cocoa, or *calentillo*[10] to the attendees at several moments during wake nights, but Liberteño people remember that, in the past, cigars and liquor were sometimes offered as well.

Each night three *rezos* (prayers), which are distributed throughout the night with the last one traditionally at around four in the morning, must be recited by a local "praying woman" (*rezandera*). Rezanderas are:

> Trained professionals who get paid for their participation in the wake. Their ritual performance is a key part of the ceremony and it constitutes the sacred aspect of it.… The praying session is structured around rosaries, which determine when specific prayers are spoken, or chanted out-loud. These prayers may change, depending on the time of the night, the religious significance of the day, or other features particular to each *rezandera.*… The most common prayers… are the *Padre Nuestro* (Our Father), *Ave María* (Hail Mary), *Credo* (The Creed), litanies, and a long prayer at the end of the rosary that is the special contribution of each *rezandera*. (Rojas and McDowell 2017: 9)

[10]A hot, tea-like beverage made from boiling *hierba-limón* with sugar and sometimes ginger.

Community members and cultural specialists perform several forms of entertainment to keep attendees awake throughout the three rezos, including jokes, storytelling and enacted song-games, in addition to domino and card games played between the prayers.

Afro-Colombian funerary rituals differ depending on whether the wake is for an adult or a child. In the 1960s, George List documented specific song-games that were played only at either adult or children wakes, while others were played at both as well as by both adults and children. In Libertad, I found that the same games were played at the wakes of adults and children, with the difference being that only children should play the games at children's wakes. Children tend to prefer specific games. Also, children's funerary wakes (*velorios de angelito*) last fewer than nine nights, depending on how old the child was. As documented by List, children who die before and about ten years old are considered *angelitos* (little angels), which means that the ritual performed for mourning them would be a children's funerary wake (List 1968, Rojas and McDowell 2017).

Based on my observations of wakes and discussions with Libertad community members, the general atmosphere at wakes is a mix between festivity and mourning, with the festive atmosphere more prominent outside of the house, and mourning more prominent in the living room. Wakes are considered important social gatherings, events in which "the whole community" (*toda la comunidad*) is involved, and a period in which there is more moral license to be on the streets at night, which encourages other forms of socializing. Several older Liberteño men have told me an account that is similar to one described by Norman Whitten about funerary wakes in the Colombian Pacific coast: local

residents considered funerary wakes also as a great opportunity to create new "alliances" or to find a girlfriend in town (in Jaramillo 2006: 279).

George List's fieldwork materials from the region also illustrate diversity in the use of entertainment at wakes. In some towns, certain kinds of storytelling and/or song-games were not played at children's wakes, for example, as McDowell and I account for based on List's field materials:

> Because of the festive, and sometimes offensive, nature of jokes and tales, as well as the loudness and uncontrollable laughter… involved in the performance of these speech forms, not everybody was comfortable with having jokes told at their relatives' funerals. Each family's notion of appropriateness influenced the decision of whether jokes or other forms of storytelling should be performed. (Rojas and McDowell 2017: 12)

The official Catholic religious narratives in Colombia tend to deem it inappropriate to mix mourning and joy, yet this Afro-Colombian practice remains. Though not everyone practices it in Libertad (mostly due to differences in class and race), this cultural expression is popular in the oldest and poorest neighborhoods of Libertad. While some devout Catholic families mourn for a whole year, dressing in black and avoiding music or other recreational activities, the black West African cultural contribution sets a context in which the dead interact with the living, and where mourning is just one way of addressing a relative's departure from the material world.

Las Maruchas*: Song and Play in the Face of Death*

The traditional funerary-wake games in Libertad, also called *maruchas* because of the popularity of the local game "La marucha," are somewhat similar to children's songs, with simple melodies and call-and-response vocal parts, usually sung by a group of people who perform specific actions determined by the rules of the game. Often a single person starts, guides, and concludes the games through song. The maruchas have histrionic

elements (in their embodied performance or in song) and are intended to entertain and spark laughter, among both participants and spectators, whose attention usually is absorbed by these performances. When losing, some games involve expressions of controlled aggression, like softly (but firmly) hitting losers with a branch, as in "El café" or "La Patilla va" (The Watermelon Goes). Other games involve shaming actions (*penitencia*) for the losers, such as doing impersonations of animals or of other community members, or wearing chicken feathers on the ear to let people know who is losing, as in the *truco* card game.

These practices are an extension of the funerary wake tradition documented by George List and others (List 1965, 1968; Jaramillo 2006; Escalante 1989) in Afro-Colombian populations and specifically in this area of the Colombian Caribbean. Adult games seem to persist more strongly in Libertad, although they are played by both children and adults. As McDowell and I explain:

> Games involve a performance in which actions are conducted according to specific rules. This type of game includes "Carga la Burra" (Carry the Donkey), "El Besito Acomodado" (The Well-placed Little Kiss), "La Barca" (The Dingy), and "El Cocotiáo" (The Coconuted One). These games are different from children's games because they involve a certain degree of physical aggression or sexualized behavior. In "El Besito Acomodado," for example, the person whose turn it is must guess which member of the circle is hiding a straw; if the guess is accurate, that player must pay a penalty by receiving a kiss from [a person of the winner's choosing]. In "La Barca," people in a circle take turns tossing a shoe into the air. If it lands with the sole facing upwards, then everybody has to laugh, but if it lands with the sole facing down, then everybody must stay quiet. The players, in a controlled-aggression context, will whip whoever does not comply with the required action with their belts for a brief moment.[11] (Rojas and McDowell 2017: 11)

The game of "La marucha" is played in a circle by wake participants, usually in separate groups of children and adults, who join hands and rhythmically jump

[11] Interview with Jaime Mercado in 1965 (List 1965).

counterclockwise, stepping in unison. A lead person in the middle of the circle dances smoothly in the same direction and sings these verses (which I recorded from Isabel Martínez "Chabelo"):

San Basilio y San Simón	Saint Basil and Saint Simon
Santos de mi devoción	Saints of my devotion
Sácame esta pesadilla	Take away this nightmare
Que llevó en el corazón	That I carry in my heart
La patilla serenada	The dewed watermelon
Prima hermana del melón	Is first cousin with the melon
Sácame esta pesadilla	Take away this nightmare
Que llevó en el corazón	That I carry in my heart

After these lines have been sung, the chorus jumps in with, "Ay marucha!" The musical tempo of the song and the movement range of the dance picks up, as does the volume and pitch of the lead chants, which use a repetitive motif ("Trucha, que trucha, que trá!") as anchorage for the singer to repeat traditional sexually allusive verses or to improvise new ones using the same structure. The following is the continuation of this instance of Chabelo's "La marucha":

¡Ay Marucha!	*Aye Marucha!*
¡Trucha, que trucha, que trá!	Trout, so trout, so tra!
¡Ay Marucha!	*Aye Marucha!*
¡Trucha, que trucha, que trá!	Trout, so trout, so tra!
¡Ay Marucha!	*Aye Marucha!*
Dénle la escoba a la chucha	Give pussy the broom
¡Ay Marucha!	*Aye Marucha!*
Como que quiere barrer	Looks like she wants to sweep
¡Ay Marucha!	*Aye Marucha!*
Ya me barrió la mondá	She already swept my dick
¡Ay Marucha!	*Aye Marucha!*
Busca una barra de jabón	Look for a bar of soap
¡Ay Marucha!	*Aye Marucha!*
Lávate bien el cordón	Wash your cord well
¡Ay Marucha!	*Aye Marucha!*
¡Trucha, que trucha, que trá!	Trout, so trout, so tra!

¡Denle un anzuelo a la chucha	Give pussy a hook
¡Ay Marucha!	*Aye Marucha!*
Como que ya va a pescar	Looks like she is going to fish
¡Ay Marucha!	*Aye Marucha!*
Pescó una buena mondá	She fished a good dick
¡Ay Marucha!	*Aye Marucha!*
Pa' que la tenga clavá	To nail you good
¡Ay Marucha!	*Aye Marucha!*
¡Trucha, que trucha, que tra!	Trout, so trout, so tra!

Given the hilarity, innuendo, and sexualized lyric content of the song, players and spectators seem to enjoy it intensely. They jump and sing even harder as more verses go by or as new lead person jumps into the circle to collaborate. A single instance of "La marucha" can last up to ten minutes, as I witnessed. After the game is over, funerary-wake game masters, such as Chabelo, immediately either start singing again or lead the crowd into another game, continuing the cycle of entertainment and maintaining the high energy level. This way, the mutual engagement and cultural work of all participants turns the funerary situation into a festive and joyful context in which game leaders, other players, and spectators are all working together towards perpetuating that state of *gozo* (gusto) or *sabrosura* (a state of being happy and relaxed, but sometimes also energetic and joyful). Community members describe the games as good for entertaining the mourning family, for keeping people awake for the prayers, and for encouraging people to support other community members. In addition, there is an idea that the games are fun, and, because they are framed in a traditional social situation that gathers big crowds, they alter the daily lives of members of the community by encouraging heightened and intensified levels of social interaction.

While "La Marucha" is a traditional song-game from the Libertad area, I could identify the song performance in other instances, as well, all of them associated with Afro-

Colombian culture, although none is current. The song "Marucha," for example, was recorded by the tropical Pacific Coast jazz band Peregoyo y Su Combo Vacaná in the 1970s. It bears strong similarities in the initial verses and the melody with the Libertad version.[12] However, this recording of popular music does not reveal any hint about a funerary context of the song. On the other hand, George List describes the game "El Florón," which bears a different name, as the most popular one in *velorios de angelito* (children wakes) in the Colombian Caribbean region in the 1960s. The melody of the verses, before the vocal call-and-response section, is similar to Chabelo's "La marucha" (List 1965). While the lyrics of the beginning verses are not the same, they contain fragments of found in the Libertad version that I documented. Here is a transcription of "El florón" (The Rossette), by Marcelina Sánchez, from the town of Evitar, as recorded by George List:[13]

El florón está en la mano,	The florón is in the hand;
Y en la mano está el florón (bis)	And in the hand the florón is. (repeat)
La patilla de sereno	The dew watermelon
Prima hermana del melón	Is first cousin with the melon
Por aquí pasó, pasó, pasó.	*Over here it passed, it passed, it passed*
Por aquí pasó, pasó, pasó.	*Over here it passed, it passed, it passed.*

"El florón" also appears recurrently as a game and/or song in funerary-wake rituals on the Pacific coast of Colombia, the largest Afro-Colombian cultural area in the country (ALEC [cite] n.d). But while the melody and some lyrics are very similar, the game as such differs in its call-and-response section, as well as in its performance practices. People sit in a circle on the floor and pass a piece of cloth to each other under their legs, in hiding,

[12] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRbSDE9R_q4
[13] List, 1965. Tape OT 12150, Item 5.

responding to the rhythm of the song. When the song hits the call-and-response section, the leader must find who has the cloth. It seems to be the same "El florón" game documented by List in the Caribbean; however, despite the musical and lyrical similarities, this game differs from "La marucha" not only in the performance of the game but also in the quality of the content. While "El florón" is a children's game, "La marucha" has explicit sexualized content and is mostly sung by and for adults.

In interviews conducted by George List, locals such as Pedro Collazo discussed the blurry distinction between Catholic liturgy and vernacular funerary rituals, despite Catholic doctrine, which would consider the vernacular rituals as animist.

> Even though priests knew about these practices, they did not always reject or try to ban them and, as consequence, these funerary traditions show interconnections between African-descendent cosmologies and Roman Catholic beliefs. In earlier times, many small towns and villages did not have a resident priest or church, as was the case in Evitar in the Department of Bolívar [and as is the case in Libertad].… Therefore, religious authorities were not as present there as in other areas, and local customs had a space in which they could flourish." (Rojas and McDowell 2017: 13)

As these earlier studies demonstrate, the rituals and the musical and cultural traditions associated with them did indeed flourish through many areas in the Afro-Colombian Caribbean region, including within the town of Libertad. However, the dominance of paramilitary armies in areas such as Libertad and surrounding villages led to severely curtailed local practices.

A Silenced Town: War and the Disruption of Cultural Practices

As in many other remote rural communities in Colombia, where the presence of the state is weak and the of rule of law can barely reach, politically and economically motivated irregular armed actors arrived in Libertad in the late 1990s. In 1997, a group of

right wing paramilitaries under the command of Rodrigo Mercado Pelufo, alias "Cadena" (Chain), formed an alliance with two other paramilitary groups from the María Mountains in order to "contain the advance of the [Marxist] guerrillas and take away their sources of funding" (Observatorio de DDHH y DIH 2010: 9, quoted in Cotte 2014). Later renamed (by themselves) as the Heroes of María Mountains Bloc, this paramilitary organization spread terror throughout the entire Department of Sucre. Economic and political elites, who for years have owned large agricultural consortia in this part of the Caribbean region, historically supported these paramilitary groups because they were opposed to what the elites called "revolutionary guerrillas" who controlled and influenced that region for around three decades (Cotte 2014, Velasquez Rivera 2007).

Another somber chapter in the Colombian internal armed conflict, the overtaking of the Sucre Department by the paramilitaries included massacres, forced disappearances, torture, sexual assault, and massive forced displacement. In the period between 2000 and 2005, thousands of people, especially innocent farmers, were forceably disappeared or murdered (NHMC 2013). These crimes particularly affected the municipality of San Onofre. Although the lower lands of the municipal territory, including Libertad, were not subject to this level of brutality, they experienced another form of violence: social control through long-standing occupation (eight years in the case of Libertad). In Libertad, the paramilitary strategy was the intimidation of civilians to attain social control because expanded military force was not necessary. Full-fledged military action was used in territories that contained leftist guerrilla troops. The paramilitaries used military action, especially against civilian population, as part of a regional terror strategy, but in places like Libertad they also occupied and co-opted the local society, taking command over local

institutions, trade, social life, and political practice. Cadena assigned paramilitary commander Marco Tulio Pérez, alias El Oso (The Bear) to keep this coastal territory under control because of its routes for smuggling drugs and weapons. This group of paramilitaries can be characterized as mostly male, cisgendered, heterosexual, and Catholic mestizo Colombians who did not consider themselves black or of Afro-Colombian ascent.

As part of their social control strategy, the paramilitaries arrived in Libertad assuring locals that they were there to improve their lives, but then imposed their oppressive "laws." Throughout these years, El Oso and his forces exploited the local economy, using people's animals, crops, homes, money, labor force, and other resources for their enjoyment (OIM 2012a). Besides dispossessing locals, they also became the new local judicial system, establishing a curfew and propagating conservative, racist, and misogynistic values and politics locally. Punishing whomever opposed them and favoring people who supported them, they also aimed at co-opting local organizations and leaders in order to control their agendas, sparking acute social tensions and divisions within the community. In addition to frequent humiliations, public punishment, and control of private and public life (by, for example, making "unfaithful" women sweep the main square for a whole day under the blazing hot sun while bearing shaming signs), the paramilitaries' most infamous actions in Libertad were sexual abuses against what some estimate were approximately 80 percent of the female population. They also massacred five young men from the community in June 2000, three adult men in 1999, and beheaded two community members. But that wasn't all: they committed sixteen other murders and forcibly displaced hundreds of people from town (NCRR 2011:102, Verdad Abierta 2014).

Another cruel form of violence utilized by El Oso was the co-optation or prohibition of expressive cultural practices that he felt might undermine his imposed social order. Colombian political scientist Ángela C. Cotte, drawing from Walter Benjamin's "aestheticization of politics," argues that that paramilitary actions in the San Onofre region were also meant to insert politics into local spectacle culture (Cotte 2014: 41). She discusses the violence that transformed the symbolic order of traditional celebrations into celebrations of the local paramilitary project. For example, during Holy Week in 2003, El Oso organized a beauty pageant of girls between thirteen and seventeen years old from several nearby corregimiento, and he forced people to attend. Most of these girls were sexually abused by him during and after the pageant, an event that lasted several days and involved lots of food, alcohol, national vallenato singers such as Farid Ortiz, and famous sound systems[14] from Cartagena and Barranquilla (Cotte 2014, NCRR 2011: 57-69). These displays were intended to serve as celebrations to honor the establishment of the paramilitary reign while resignifying the meanings of traditional cultural expressions (such as Holy Week); they created memories of violence and disempowerment among local community members that last until this day.

With a similar intent, paramilitaries constrained funerary practices, limiting the practice of wakes and even forbidding mourning and crying the dead at all, as several local leaders in Libertad told to me. Among the many traumatic instances of violence, armed men disrupted funerary wakes, kicked altars down, and forced people to leave. The occupiers prohibited publicly crying for their deceased relatives, especially the ones who

[14] These sound systems, or *picós* as they are called in Caribbean Colombia, are large sets of audio equipment systems geared to play music on the streets, usually Caribbean popular music genres, for celebrations in neighborhoods or villages. These *picós* are named, painted and heavily customized. They play specific repertoires that distinguish them among other *picós.*

had been murdered by the occupiers. Severing the continuity of the practice of these cultural traditions affected an important mechanism used by community members to reinforce social integration. Funerary wakes create a sacred and secular space in which to conciliate the loss of community members with the joy of existing together as part of one social body. The demonization and prohibition of that important ritual space had as consequence the loss of a fundamental mechanism that community members used to generate empathy, integration, joy, and resilience in the face of adversity.

This cultural repression had as its ideological foundation a social order imposed by the invaders, in which an "organized," Catholic, and conservative society was enforced, with strict norms of social conduct, where women were subservient to men, where race played a key role in social status and Black people were oppressed in their own town (NCRR 2011: 71-135). Deeply racist and misogynistic in ideology, the paramilitaries in this region stigmatized black women the most, in part because they maintained strong social and communication networks; many practiced African-descendent religious traditions that were "deemed 'dangerous' and against the Christian principles defended by the paramilitaries," who labeled these women "witches" and "gossipers" (NCRR 2011: 84).

A curfew, constraints against traditional cultural practices, bans on public association, and even prohibition of basic emotional expression—all these restrictions made the town sink into a period of fear, silence, and mistrust. People stopped talking to each other: nobody knew who might be snitching to El Oso. Local celebrations were controlled by the occupiers. Local musicians stopped performing because they were afraid. The town's social framework was heavily affected: cooperation, communication, and

collective decision-making became difficult. Many young community members who grew up watching the paramilitaries did not respect their parents and other authority figures. Later, some of them re-enacted those behaviors, sparking a major intergenerational crisis, as many local leaders remember. The town was trapped in the grip of the occupation, social tension rose, and joy was taken from Libertad.

Photo 11. Isabel Martínez, also known as "Chabelo."

Local Cultural Practices and Resistance in Libertad

Afro-Colombian people in many regions of the country have been one of the most affected demographics in the internal armed conflict, in part because of the historical conditions of state abandonment of these territories and their people combined with subsequent exploitation by regional elites. Poverty and the lack of positive state interventions have made these populations vulnerable to illegal armed actors and their criminal agendas. Approximately 750,000 black people throughout Colombia have been massacred, murdered, kidnapped, raped, forcedly displaced, deprived of their lands, or

victimized in other ways,[15] by irregular rightwing paramilitary armies, leftist guerrillas, the Colombian army, drug lords, and other armed actors. Through decades of such conflict, Afro-Colombians have used their expressive and cultural practices as a means not only to resist oppression but also to maintain their cultural identity as well as their sense of community.

Funerary-wake games and rituals, for example, have been among the markers of African-Colombianity (*afrocolombianidad*) that have presumably persisted within black communities in the Colombian Caribbean for centuries. These practices have been shaped by a long history of struggle and resistance against diverse forms of discrimination and oppression suffered by Afro-Colombians, becoming themselves expressions of resistance against colonial white-centered cultural domination. The situation in the 1990s was no different: paramilitaries targeted Afro-Colombian culture because they deemed it "inferior" as well as subversive to their ultra-conservative and tyrannical social order.

Chabelo, one of Libertad's strongest cultural leaders, recognized the relevance of what was going on. Despite risks and threats, she continued playing song-games at the wakes during the occupation because she believed they were important for keeping people together and united. Born in 1952, Chabelo began playing games at the age of eight when Vicente Porto and Pablito Blanco, two older masters of traditional games, began bringing her, with her grandparents' permission, to wakes. They recognized in her a "had great talent and grace" for playing the games (interview with Isabel Martínez, 3/16/2016). Since then, she has never stopped singing and playing at funerary wakes. Although she told she took a few months off because of the unstable situation during the occupation, Chabelo

[15] Registro Único de Víctimas (Unified Victims Registry) from the Victims Unit. http://rni.unidadvictimas.gov.co/RUV

claims to have persisted with the cultural practice. In her own words, “There was a law against playing, but I kept playing, and nothing happened to me” (Interview with Isabel Martínez, 3/22/2016). After the occupation ended, Chabelo pushed for a cultural revival project in the post-conflict context of the Collective Reparation Plan of Libertad.

The paramilitary regime was oppressive and violent in many ways, strategically attacking the core of communal values. As part of the process of disempowering locals, paramilitaries also used cultural repression to dissolve local initiatives and collective practices that were fundamental in generating social contexts that facilitated cooperation, solidarity, and the development of social capital. Several expressions of this sort are continuities from long-standing Afro-Colombian cultural practices that have shaped the history of struggle and resistance of black Colombians against oppression and racism. Practices such as the funerary wake have a long history of creating such community-building social spaces, which is the reason they were banned by the paramilitary armies and why cultural leaders, such as Chabelo, fought to guarantee their perpetuation. This seed planted by the cultural leaders eventually sprouted into larger processes that currently use local culture and music as tool for community-building.

CHAPTER 3
COLLECTIVE ACTION: EXPRESSIVE CULTURE AND PEACEBUILDING IN LIBERTAD

In 2004, the Libertad community expelled the paramilitaries from town, an event that coincided with the passing of a transitional justice law that encouraged the retreat of right wing paramilitary groups from the María Mountains region. This law did not order their retreat, though it was considered a political condition for passing the law in congress. The planning, design, and implementation of government-funded collective reparation programs that followed entailed the use of local cultural practices, emphasizing community members' deeply-rooted sense of community and the use of these practices in peacebuilding and communal rehabilitation.

Libertad has a history of resistance and collective action, with residents standing up for their rights within the limits and constraints of particular contexts in several important instances that I will describe below. In the context of peacebuilding in a post-conflict stage, participation in the local Collective Reparation Plan and local cultural performances have been permeated by a spirit of cooperative action oriented towards social transformation. This sense of collectivity is greatly shaped by empathy and often inspired by collective expressive practices in which participants communicate with each other emotionally while cooperating, strengthening ties, revalidating their cultural histories, and engaging in community-building.

Since the liberation of the community, organizers and residents have embraced local cultural performances in diverse ways in relation to the goals of the CRP. These

social transformations have become tangible as improvements in intergenerational relationships (such as the recognition of young leadership in the local peacebuilding process) and through grassroots cultural revival processes that have fostered traditional celebrations, music, dance, oral expressions, and other practices.

Specific circumstances have made this situation possible in Libertad, including collective memories of strong local histories of resistance and collective action, historically rooted musical traditions, the resilience of local artists, the participation in institutional programs, and healthy levels of multilevel social capital that facilitate solidarity and social mobility. The growing multilevel interdependence of sociopolitical governance systems (also known as "decentralization") calls for organizations and institutions, including ones running community rehabilitation programs and practices, to account for the building of multilevel social capital to "promote cumulative improvements in local conditions beyond the influx of external subsidies usually associated with development projects" (Brondizio, Ostrom, and Young 2009: 264). The rise of multilevel social capital can be correlated with the increase of a community's autonomy.

In this chapter I will first discuss the liberation of Libertad from occupation and the subsequent national legal frameworks and programs the led to the creation of the Collective Reparation Plan. In part because of the principle of participation that guided the CRP and the work of local cultural leaders, Libertad's initiative focused on the potential for positive social and cultural impact and emphasized the important role that traditional music and other local cultural practices could play within the CRP and in peacebuilding processes. As I will discuss, the CRP initiative transformed in many ways over the years, in part because of the involvement of a number of non-profit organizations that worked

with musicians and members of the Libertad community. But, as I will explain in this chapter, a group of young musicians who previously had been excluded from the CRP later became important actors in the initiatives as they worked to build bridges between younger and older generations and between contemporary popular forms and traditional musical practices. These practices, along with their commitment to principles of collective action (which many residents consider to be a long-standing characteristic of local culture), increased the group's social capital and enabled them to transform some of the social hierarchies that had been embedded within Libertad's CRP.

Photo 12. Local artist Ralam singing during the twelfth anniversary of the liberation of Libertad in June, 2016.

Collective Action: Liberation from the Paramilitaries

One night in June of 2004, paramilitary commander "Diomedes"[16] was drinking at the canteen next to the local cemetery, when he felt challenged by the gaze of a young man standing nearby. He and two of his men beat up the young man and took him to the town square, where they tied him up to a post in order to execute him after they had finished partying. The young man, who was a beloved community member, escaped and hid in his uncle's house. Later that day, Diomedes and his men arrived at the uncle's house. There they found the young man's armed uncle defying them publicly; while taking an immense risk, the young man's uncle also knew the commander Diomedes and his men were inebriated. Other bystanders from the town also began to defy the soldiers. This was not the first time that the paramilitaries had committed such violent public abuse. They sometimes whipped people publicly in the main square for supposedly "not abiding by good values and morality." This was not the first time that something like this happened, but there was something different about that day. This time many residents stood up together against the occupiers.

The order of events that happened next is not completely clear, as community members are careful about what they include and omit when telling this story. The account I include here is my reconstruction from several sources, including testimonies by some

[16] Diomedes replaced El Oso as commander of the paramilitary operation in Libertad after the latter demobilized and submitted to the transitional justice system proposed under the Justice and Peace Law. This judicial and legal framework allowed thousands of paramilitary combatants to demobilize and created "truth commissions" to start the process of reparation for the victims. The project was highly controversial, as many people argue that it involved almost total impunity for several paramilitary leaders who committed crimes against humanity. On the other hand, the "truth commissions" process was trumped when, unexpectedly, president Álvaro Uribe Vélez extradited fourteen leaders of the United Self-Defense Groups of Colombia overnight to the United States, presumably, as many political analysts argue, before they started confessing close relationships between the paramilitaries and his government (Verdad Abierta 2009).

communal leaders and official government reports (NCRR 2011: 190-197). That moment of commotion between the paramilitaries and community members became the initial soundtrack of a breaking point in the recent history of this Afro-Colombian town. The bystanders were no longer submissively accepting the situation. One of Diomedes's bodyguards advised him to stop because people were getting upset. But he did not. Once he had pushed just a little too far, the angry crowd rebelled and went after the paramilitaries. They chased, caught, and disarmed the men. When Diomedes realized that the crowd was not going to be intimidated, however, he managed to escape. Running through the streets of Libertad, he hoped to reach Mompox, which was the colloquial name given to the hacienda Estancia Momposina, the largest agricultural property in Libertad and one of the headquarters of the paramilitaries. Before he got to Mompox, Diomedes was caught by the crowd of residents, close to what is now called Commemoration Bridge. After eight years of rampage, exploitation, humiliation, and abuse suffered from the paramilitary armies, members of the community of Libertad took their destiny back into their hands: the anonymous crowd ended Diomedes's life.

What came after was the sudden realization that the entire community, regardless of who had been part of this act of rebellion, was going face cruel retaliation. The word spread quickly, as did terror. The people now had no choice but to fight back. As some local leaders explained this moment to me, they felt like they had nothing to lose anymore: Diomedes was dead, and if they did nothing they were going to be killed as well. So, people organized. An organized crowd went to the houses where they knew that paramilitaries kept their weapons and retrieved them. Inquiries started: "Who did military service?" With the few guns that they collected, as well as shotguns, machetes, rocks,

sticks, and whatever else they could find, community members spent the night in the main square, waiting for the paramilitaries to attack. But nothing happened that night. The citizens closed the town, inspecting every car that came in or out, and they patrolled the streets. Official accounts say that this situation lasted seven days, until the Army Battalion of Malagana, located around fifty miles away, received written notice from the community and sent men over (NCRR 2011: 190-197).

No retaliation came during those seven days while community members were avidly guarding on the square and borders of town. The other paramilitaries had quickly fled the town when they witnessed people arming themselves and acting as a unified collective. There were no signs of an attack or revenge. Cadena, Diomedes's boss and the commander of the Heroes of María Mountains paramilitary bloc, found out about what had happened in Libertad the next day. When he heard that the community was armed, he decided against trying to regain control over that territory. Perhaps it was too much trouble, or maybe he simply did not have the men to control the situation. When the soldiers from the Colombian army finally arrived, the community gave them the weapons they had collected from the paramilitaries. Eventually, this marginalized and impoverished community of Afro-Colombian farmers realized that there was not going to be any retaliation, that they had won, that they had successfully united to transformed their reality, breaking the chains of oppression, violence, and abuse.

The illegal occupation of Libertad ended in June of 2004, but it left behind a shattered and impoverished community, a largely displaced population with its local social networks co-opted and in essence destroyed. Although the occupation had ended in Libertad, the surrounding territories were still affected by the influence of armed

paramilitaries/drug smugglers. Therefore, uncertainty and deep mistrust continued to reign in Libertad, not only mistrust of the institutions of the state, but also of fellow community members. The paramilitary reign of terror and government betrayal had left deep scars in the social fabric of the community. Nobody knew who had been a secret collaborator or who had been responsible for abuses committed against them and their families. The occupation was over, but the state had not shown up to assist these citizens in their moment of greatest need. It took three years for the collective reparation programs to start making their presence known in Libertad, with the aim of directly addressing the consequences of the damages caused by conflict.

Photo 13. A local leadership meeting in the framework of Libertad's Collective Reparation Plan (CRP).

Post-Conflict: The Integral Collective Reparation Plan (CRP) of Libertad

In 2005 the Justice and Peace Law (Law 975/2005) was passed by Congress; the law aimed at both expediting the national demobilization of the rightwing paramilitary squads and establishing collective reparation programs to address the needs of the victims of the internal armed conflict. The history of paramilitary forces in Colombia is a complex

issue that has involved many different Colombian territories. The rise of paramilitary forces in the 1990s was particulary important because it was at this time that Álvaro Uribe Vélez, then Governor of the Antioquia Department, legalized self-defense militias to protect the interests of large landowners and agro-industrialists, allowing these private armies to expand their reach. Under the argument that they protected the agrarian elites from extortion and sabotage by leftist guerrillas, these militias grew significantly, particularly during the two terms Uribe Vélez served as President of Colombia (2002-2010). The paramilitaries permeated the structure of the state in a fashion similar to what Pablo Escobar and the Medellin Cartel had done in the early 1990s (García-Peña 2005). Paramilitaries heavily influenced nearly all government institutions. Those that were not, such as the Supreme Court, were stigmatized and persecuted by a government that publicly defended justice, but was secretly collaborating with drug cartels and terrorist groups to weaken the guerrilla forces and prevent challenges to regional economic hegemonies. An example that illustrates the level of co-optation is that more than sixty congressmen from the Uribe era were convicted for ties with paramilitary organizations (Álvaro 2009, López and Sevillano 2008).

This involvement with and state support of criminal organizations was the context in which the design and implementation of the Justice and Peace Law took place. Through this law the government pretended to do several things: in addition to cleaning up its image through reparation programs, officials also hoped to establish a soft transitional justice system that gave paramilitary leaders who committed crimes against humanity concessions and, for some, a maximum jail sentence of only eight years (Álvaro 2009: 78-79). Human rights activists considered the latter to be a joke and an offense. Thousands of members of

the paramilitary armies were demobilized in a controversial process that did not include programs to successfully reinsert them back into civilian life. As consequence, most of them returned to the mountains of Colombia to form a second wave of paramilitary armies called the *Bacrim* (*Bandas Criminales*, or criminal bands), which continue to harass farmers in several areas of Colombia today (Prieto 2013) and have an international reach (Rico 2013).

The National Commission of Reparation and Reconciliation (NCRR), the entity responsible for working with victims of the armed conflict, chose seven "collective reparation subjects" to develop pilot processes of collective reparation. They selected these subjects based on assessments of the collective nature of the harm they suffered and the level of destruction that affected their communities. The idea was to provide tools to victims to at least acknowledge and mitigate, if not reverse, the social, judicial, cultural, and economic damages caused by conflict. Libertad was selected as one of the first seven collective reparation pilot processes in Colombia (IOM 2012a). Rosenfeld defines collective reparation i as "the benefits conferred on collectives in order to undo the collective harm that has been caused as a consequence of a violation of international law" (Rosenfeld 2010: 732). In Libertad, this post-conflict initiative, which incorporated language and narratives common in the fields of conflict transformation and psychosocial rehabilitation, started officially in 2007 when government officials and members of national and international NGOs, along with multilateral organizations, met with community members and representatives in Libertad to discuss ideas that eventually would became the Integral Collective Reparation Plan (CRP) of Libertad, drafted and sanctioned in December 2011 (NCRR 2012:15-17, IOM 2012a: 12).

At that moment, however, national scandal tainted the credibility of the Justice and Peace Law, which stemmed from the level of impunity enjoyed by most paramilitary leaders, the obvious rearming of squads under different names, the lack of concrete outcomes to guarantee victims the rights to truth and reparation; but mostly, the scandal arose from the sudden extradition of the main fourteen paramilitary chiefs to the United States in 2008. Presumably, the Uribe Vélez's government wanted to prevent these chiefs from revealing to the Colombian justice system the close ties between the paramilitary and government leaders.

One important flaw in the way the Justice and Peace Law addressed the victims was the lack of what in Colombia is called a "differential approach," meaning a public policy approach that discerns diverse types of demographics according to their particular needs. The differential approach refrains from viewing victims as one homogeneous group and instead views them in relation to their particular sociocultural contexts. In Colombia, the differential approach distinguishes the elderly, children, indigenous groups, Afro-Colombians, other ethnic groups, the LGBTQI population, women, people with disabilities, and people living in poverty, among others, as specific demographic segments. In a multicultural nation like Colombia, where the scale of conflict has reached every one of its territories and where regional difference is marked (Echeverri 2002, cf. Gutierrez de Pineda 1963), it was a mistake not to take a differential approach in implementing the national victims' policy. Declared useless by Congress as a plan for the reparation of victims, the Justice and Peace Law articles related to victims' reparation were replaced by the Victims' Law in 2011 (Law 1448/2011), which dismantled the National Commission

for Reparation and Reconciliation and, in its place, created the Unit for the Victims' Attention and Integral Reparation (or Victims Unit).

However, by the time the national scandal surrounding the Justice and Peace Law reached the mainstream media, the National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation (NCRR) had already started working in Libertad. Through alliances with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations International Organization for Migrations (IOM), the NCRR had managed to develop several infrastructure projects, such as the reconstruction of the local health center, the building of a sports field, and the construction of bathrooms for the elementary school (IOM 2012a: 101). The IOM and USAID also collaborated on the initial stages of the Collective Reparation Plan, which started with participatory processes of consultation with community members through assemblies and meetings with local leaders. When the Victims Unit took over this process in 2011, the consultation process was amplified; the meetings and assemblies were expanded to every neighborhood in Libertad and to other local social actors. This process of participation and needs assessment lasted one year, after which, with information gathered from discussions and proposals from community members, a group of local leaders and Victims Unit officials began writing the language of what became the Integral Collective Reparation Plan (CRP) of the Community of Libertad (IOM 2012b).

The CRP designated eight programs as major "reparation measures," each aimed at addressing specific damages suffered during conflict. However, this pilot CRP also included what community members considered to be "historical debts" of the state to them; these were debts owed to them because of structural problems in the government that led to

the occupation. In this way, local leaders used the opportunity of the CRP to point to the government's complicity and neglect, which they believed led to the eight-year occupation of their town by illegal armed forces. That agenda makes Libertad's CRP ambitious, and sometimes vague, since many of the reparation measures demanded in the CRP entail transforming deeply-rooted problems within the government. However, it sometimes has been difficult to clarify how such reparation measures directly relate to the collective harm suffered during conflict, making its implementation more difficult.

The eight reparation measures (which include a total of forty-two "reparation actions") appear as follows in CRP:

> 1. Promoting and guaranteeing the effective enjoyment of the right to education, in the relation to the dimensions in which it may have been limited by the armed conflict, through adult alphabetization programs, as well as access to bachelors and associate degrees for young community members;
>
> 2. Guaranteeing the recovery and improvement of access to integral health care through a "psychosocial attention"[17] program and an integral health program (conventional and local-traditional);
>
> 3. Program for the recovery of peaceful coexistence and social development;
>
> 4. Construction, improvement, and maintenance of the town's utilities networks and infrastructure, which deteriorated as consequence of conflict;
>
> 5. Guaranteeing economic revitalization, job creation, and income generation for families in the rural and urban areas of the corregimiento, as well as the recovery and strengthening of agricultural production, lost due to effects of conflict in the rural areas of the corregimiento;
>
> 6. Program for dignifying victims and recovering historical memory;
>
> 7. Guarantees to exercise the rights to truth and justice, as well as guarantees of non-repetition of victimization;
>
> 8. Recovery and strengthening of the political, sociocultural, and traditional organization of the Communal Council of Libertad. (IOM 2012b: 3)

[17] *Atención psico-social*, in Spanish, is a term from social work that refers to a process of working with a person, family, or community, to reestablish their emotional integrity and social networks.

These eight measures represent the consensus arrived at among program officials and community members. This effort can be understood within existing global projects designed to acknowledge victims' rights, such as the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005 of the "Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law" (Rosenfeld 2010: 736-737).

Collective reparation belongs to the realm of post-conflict rehabilitation, an issue often addressed by scholars and practitioners in the field of conflict transformation. As a field of academic study and practice, conflict transformation evolved rather recently, taking shape and visibility in the 1990s. It is often associated with the field of conflict resolution. However, diverging assumptions about conflict also separate these two areas of inquiry: while conflict resolution seeks a definite ending of aggression and violence, conflict transformation understands tension and conflict as an unavoidable parts of a society's structure. Therefore, the latter aims at mitigating conflict, controlling it, and turning its processes into creative outcomes; it focuses on how protracted violent conflicts can be transformed to produce constructive results for society (Kriesberg 2011: 1-2).

Two main phases are recognized in the process of conflict transformation: 1) ending widespread violence and transforming violent contention into nonviolent debate and dialogue, and 2) constructing peaceful relationships between groups while finding and tackling the structural issues that cause conflict in a society (Kriesberg 2011: 5-9). The peacebuilding approach to conflict transformation emerged as part of the latter phase: post-conflict initiatives. Peacebuilding assumes that peace, or "positive peace," is an intentional

and dynamic force in society, which needs to be constructed and maintained, thus accounting for the inevitable resurgence of tension and conflict in social groups. "Negative peace," on the other hand is simply defined as the absence of violent conflict and is not the object of peacebuilding (Galtung 1996: 14, Kriesberg 2011: 7).

Local Culture and the Collective Reparation Plan

Measure 3 of the Collective Reparation Plan—the "Program for the Recovery of Peaceful Coexistence and Social Development"—is intended to address the revival of local traditions, the recuperation of intergenerational relationships, and other actions to reestablish efficient communication and trusting relationships of cooperation and solidarity. Through tradition, empathy-building, public and participatory music, play, and dance practices, among other means, Measure 3 includes programs to build capacity and empower local leaders. Specific reparation actions contemplated within the program include:

> 1. The construction of an intergenerational cultural center, in which the following activities will be conducted:
> a) Education programs for leaders and local grassroots organizations to facilitate the recovery of their political rights;
> b) Programs for elderly adults to strengthen cultural traditions through percussion music, dance, and oral traditions;
> c) A music school to teach children and young people to play many instruments;
> d) Specific activities for the restitution of women's dignity and the resignification of their role in the community, as well as for the recovery of culture;
> 2. The construction of a multiplex sports field, supplied with athletic equipment and qualified personnel to train the members of the sports committee, who currently perform their work without proper training;
> 3. The implementation of a communal radio station to strengthen positive coexistence, spiritual practices, culture, and the community's organization process. (IOM 2012b: 15-16)

The language in this plan has been deliberately left open enough to allow for flexibility over the course of its implementation. Nonetheless, local leaders told me they

included “percussion music” and “dance” (action 1) to increase the transmission of local traditional drum-and-chant musics——such as bullerengue and gaita music—and related traditional dances that had been waning for decades but which were considered important for strengthening communal ties and cohesion. Similarly, “oral tradition” here refers to the local system of herbalism and traditional medicine, traditional funerary practices, and the corpus of local games (card games, song-games, etc.), oral performance (storytelling, jokes, prayers), and other traditional knowledge. The idea of an intergenerational cultural center where local elders teach younger people illustrates the concern for the perpetuation of tradition.

Throughout the implementation of the CRP, specific ideas of “local culture” began to evolve among program participants, ideas that are often associated traditions with romantic renditions of a nostalgic past. Contemporary scholarly literature often treats the concept of tradition as a constructed one, as a set of ideas and practices identified or constructed as “traditional” in particular sociocultural, political, and historical contexts; some point out that the construction of these traditions often reflects power relationships, political agendas, and assumptions about identity (Hobsbawm 1983, Glassie 1995, Impey 2007, Handler and Linnekin 1984). During this phase of the CRP, participants strongly associated the concept of local culture with an idealized, romantic, and nostalgic notion of tradition.

Many participants also associated their local culture with historical practices of cultural resistance. A report by the NCRR features cultural resistance among several forms exercised by community members during the occupation (NCRR 2011:171). Witchcraft, spiritual work, and diverse kinds of prayer, all rooted in a regional syncretism of Catholic

and Afro-Colombian religious practices, are reported as forms of resistance people used to protect themselves against the oppressors. During the paramilitary occupation, several school teachers in Libertad developed extracurricular programs to keep the youth engaged inside the school or the library, thereby protecting them because these locations were seen as apolitical spaces that did not threaten the newly established social order imposed by the paramilitary army. Some other strategies of individual resistance described in that report—such as extended ocean fishing journeys, working in the fields, taking complicated routes and shortcuts to avoid or mislead the paramilitaries, and hanging out at the beach instead of on the streets of town (which were usually patrolled); these actions required an intimate knowledge of and strategic relationship with the local terrain (NCRR 2011: 171-182). In the previous chapter I described how some leaders exercised a form of cultural resistance by perpetuating the practice of funerary wakes, which, although contained, persisted despite explicit prohibition and control.

As part of the needs-assessment phase of the CRP, several capacity-building workshops were held for local leaders, aiming at empowering them to recognize and demand their rights and those of all community members (IOM 2012a: 145). These workshops involved training in communal leadership, agricultural projects, community arts (theater), dance and movement therapy, and the rehabilitation of the social fabric. Always participating in these activities, Chabelo took every opportunity to insist to program officials that funerary-wake games were a fundamental aspect of local oral tradition and should be included within the workshops. In the framework of activities and events related to the Collective Reparation Plan, Chabelo started participating in dramatized representations of the many funerary-wake song-games (maruchas). These performances

were constructed with the idea of becoming staged representations of local culture that could be used to start a process of cultural revival. These cultural performances were simultaneously demonstrations of these practices to local people (especially members of the younger generations) and models for representing the community at regional and national governmental and NGO events within the framework of national victims' policies and programs.

Evolving between approximately 2009 and 2013, activities belonging to the CRP include a chosen core of local cultural expressions that began a process of local cultural revival. These activities include five main elements: traditional musics and dance, funerary-wake rituals, games and oral expressions, traditional medicine, and local celebrations. However, lack of immediate funding for these activities, the absence of program officials residing *in situ* for long periods of time, and the apathy of local leaders in supporting these initiatives when third-party workers were not visiting town made progress slow. By "third party," I mean officials working for outside institutions and organizations, either from government or civil society, who are not considered part of the diverse social complex that is the Libertad community.[18]

The above-mentioned selection of cultural activities still functioned to a certain extent in the daily life of the community, mostly due to the selfless efforts of local cultural leaders. While supporting dramatized cultural representations of local culture was considered progress in the cultural revival project, the lack of sustained processes to incorporate these activities within the daily life of the community diminished their impact. In this phase of CRP, "local culture" was still understood by most local leaders as staged folkloric

[18] In legal terms, the participants in a contract are called "first" and "second parties." The "third party" would be considered an outside actor that can perform a diverse range of legal actions from a perspective that is independent from the first and second parties.

performances, intended to represent local cultural practices locally and abroad, rather than as part of a collective process of sociocultural rehabilitation. In this regard, here I will use the term "folkloric" to denote cultural products and practices transformed to portray public representations of local culture. As John McDowell argues, the process of making something "fokloric," also called "folklorization," is sometimes presented as a corruption or reification of cultural practices. However, mediating a cultural production to reinsert it in a different context of consumption is not necessairly objectifying or denigrating, since these new mediated contexts of cultural production still communicate profound cultural meanings, although in recontextualized settings (McDowell 2010). In regards to the term "folklorization," according to McDowell:

> among the clutch of scholars using this term today, a consensus has formed implicating folklorization as a processing of local traditions for external consumption. (McDowell 2010: 183)

Participants' use of these folkloric cultural practices was aimed at raising awareness about local traditions and their social roles and, in this way, moved beyond an approach to arts and development that sees "culture and the arts" as means for generating revenue and reactivating local economies. Focusing on the arts as economic development through the culture industries, this approach aims at molding artistic processes and products to respond to the needs of said industries. This still-hegemonic approach to arts and development excludes communal artistic expressions performed within the community because they do not fit well into the commercial aims of the market economy (Matarasso 1996, 1997). The Libertad case shows that measures taken to include music and other cultural expressions within this post-conflict reparation initiative were conceived of as efforts to address local culture not solely as an economic activity but as a local resource to be used more broadly for positive social impact. The participatory program-design process

reflects this position, as the community members insisted on addressing local cultural expressions within the CRP. This initiative also aligns with larger global tendencies to generate evaluation mechanisms that take into account the need to assess the social and cultural impact of the arts in community development (Matarasso 1996, Hagg 2010, Kay 2000, Newman et al. 2003).

Since the 1970s, the Glasgow-based think tank Comedia has conducted research on the creative industries, focusing its work since the 1990s on the potential of the arts to improve local socioeconomic development through individual, social, and cultural impacts (Landry 1996, Matarasso 1997, Burnell 2012), work that is explained by Joshua Guetzkow in his state-of-the art article on "arts impact studies" (Guetzkow 2002). Guetzkow breaks down the local impact of arts projects as "individual" (divided into material/health, cognitive/psychological, and interpersonal categories) and "community" (divided into economic, cultural, and social categories). With the assumption that the arts "increase social capital and community cohesion" (Guetzkow 2002: 5), Guetzkow focuses primarily on cultural and social impacts. From many of the studies he reviews, he concludes that

> Regardless of the ultimate purpose(s) to which social capital is to be put, community arts programs are said to build social capital by boosting individuals' ability and motivation to be civically engaged, as well as building organizational capacity for effective action. This is specifically accomplished by:
> 1. Creating a venue that draws people together who would otherwise not be engaged in constructive social activity,
> 2. Fostering trust between participants and thereby increasing their generalized trust of others,
> 3. Providing an experience of collective efficacy and civic engagement, which spurs participants to further collective action,
> 4. Arts events may be a source of pride for residents… in their community, increasing their sense of connection to that community,
> 5. Providing an experience for participants to learn technical and interpersonal skills important for collective organizing,
> 6. Increasing the scope of individuals' social networks,

7. Providing an experience for the organizations involved to enhance their capacities. (Guetzkow 2002: 7)

The intended role of local culture in Libertad's reparation plan is oriented in these directions, although, in its initial phase, the extent of its impact was limited by the absence of resources to sustain continued processes and the lack of social networks with the capacity to embrace sustained commitment. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that, despite limitations, the intent behind the program was based on assumptions parallel to what Jeni Burnell calls an "asset-based" approach to "small change" (2012). Asset-based approaches, which are a continuation of Ostrom's idea of collective action as cooperative, are constructed on the "premise that people in communities can organize to drive the development process themselves by identifying and mobilizing existing (but often unrecognized) assets" (Mathie and Cunningham 2003, quoted in Burnell 2012: 134). In Libertad's case, the cultural assets are diverse, community-building local practices identified as "traditions to revitalize" through Measure 3 of the CRP: oral traditions (herbalism and traditional medicine, funerary-wake rituals, games, local festivities) and percussion music and dance (bullerengue and gaita).

Local Culture and the Emergence of Younger Leadership: Intergenerational Tensions and Social Divisions

All CRPs in Colombia (around 300 in 2017) are managed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and their activities are coordinated between officials in the national Victims Unit and local Impulse Committees. Impulse Committees represent local communities in the CRP process and should include representatives from all relevant local groups and social actors. In Libertad, the Impulse Committee was created around 2010, and the leaders who participate in it worked thoroughly to address a complex and

ambitious plan that aimed at providing structural improvement in livings conditions. The local Impulse Committee is made up of twenty-two representatives from local associations and interest groups (such as associations of local farmers, elderly adults, women, educators, and acknowledged local elders and culture specialists) as well as Afro-Colombian and indigenous organizations and representatives from Sabanetica and Arroyo Seco, two smaller neighboring villages also included in the CRP. Community members identified these leaders who then were elected to the committee. Its members were confirmed in 2013, after the official approval of Libertad's CRP on December 2011, when the Victims Unit was already in charge of the process (Victims Unit 2013).

With the arrival of the Victims Unit and the transition to a differential approach in the implementation of collective reparation, program officials identified other sets of social actors and included them in meetings, workshops, and other CRP activities. Many times, these social actors do not participate directly through the Impulse Committee, but through the Interlacing (*Entrelazando*) program, a multi-faceted strategy of the Victims Unit. This strategy builds on diverse horizontal and vertical networks of groups to achieve the larger objective of "rehabilitation of the social fabric …[through] processes that foster positive coexistence and the reestablishment of trusting relationships between the diverse communal actors and the state, from a rights-holder approach, and already existing collective initiatives" (Victims Unit 2012: 4).[19] In the Interlacing Program documents, the "social fabric" is never defined explicitly, but actions seen as contributing to it include the reconstruction of collective "life plans" (*planes de vida*) and ethnic development programs, actions towards reconciliation and peaceful coexistence, and activities oriented towards

[19] "Procesos tenientes a propiciar la convivencia y el restablecimiento de relaciones de confianza entre diferentes actores de las comunidades y el Estado, desde un enfoque de derechos y partiendo de las iniciativas colectivas ya existentes" (Victims Unit 2012: 4).

raising awareness in communities and social groups about their active role as subjects in collective reparation processes, among others (Victims Unit 2012: 12). One focus is on empowering leaders, who are seen as "guardians of the community," or people whose contributions to keeping people united are acknowledged locally. Through monthly capacity-building workshops and other activities throughout year (such as mural painting in public spaces, commemoration of special events, cleaning brigades, and so on), the group of local "weavers" (*tejedores*) works with Victims Unit "interlacers" (entrelazadores) to generate strategies to rehabilitate the social fabric.

A new youth organization called the Juvenile Peace-Fostering Organization of Libertad (JPFO) began participating in the Interlacing Program, with the support of the regional NGO Sowing Peace (*Sembrando Paz*), when some JPFO members were elected as "weavers." The JPFO is a grassroots organization that works to foster local projects related to environmental protection, such as organizing community "guardians" that check on and protect the local creek basins; the recovery of local agricultural techniques, such as projects to bring back the use of "native seeds" and diverse varieties of local crops; the fostering of athletics through ultimate-frisbee teams and regional torunaments; and the development of local culture through theater and music groups. Consisting of around forty young members of the community, the dynamism of this young organization was notorious, and its music, theater, and sports projects seemed to be off to a good start.

But older local leaders did not seem too happy about the JPFO's inclusion within CRP activities. Among the reparation actions to be implemented under Measure 3, improving intergenerational relations was one of the more difficult ones. During the occupation, the paramilitaries, a symbol of power who stood in opposition to the traditional

local authority (the elders), were often admired by young people who aspired to similar lifestyles of privilege and power (NCRR 2011: 78-87).

During the occupation, elders and adults had to witness the values of "respect"[20] with which they were raised were being challenged and replaced by a paramilitary order dominated by injustice, oppression, misogyny, racism, and other forms of exclusion. Not all local young people embraced these new values or aligned with the occupiers, but many grew up within a status quo in which their parents' authority (as that of other adults) was questioned. Elders and adults felt threatened and, when the CRP started, young people were excluded from the representation process. When the JFPO was formed a few years later in 2014, its members realized that it was not going to be easy to participate in a program dominated by a local leadership that was prejudiced against them. Their response was to develop a critical approach towards the way the Impulse Committee had been managing CRP activities and programs.

The JPFO embraced projects from local youth and empowered them to encourage association and other forms of collective work. One project the JPFO was close to, but did not fully support, was the local hip-hop band Los Dioses (The Gods), which had been working locally since around 2012. This band was led by Luis Miguel—also known as Ralam—a young singer-songwriter and aspiring community leader. Ralam, with two other young local singers, started writing and singing hip-hop lyrics that addressed social problems in an aggressive and critical tone, many times speaking out directly at leaders. His songs addressed problems, such as what he considered poor management in local politics, through rants in a kind of rap-battle style. Dominant local leaders took these

[20] Older Caribbean coastal Colombians refer to "respect" (*respeto*) as a moral compass with which they were raised, usually involving strict obedience to elders, who without necessarily being their relatives, had the right to "correct" the children.

actions as an insult that showed a lack of respect for the work they were doing. Even though Los Dioses was the only music band conducting engaged creative work in this small community, it was excluded from the Collective Reparation Plan. Many young leaders told me that such marginalization and exclusion were a consequence of a more generalized image of the youth as "rogue," "chaotic," and "disrespectful," an image that was constructed during the occupation. This community, traumatized by violence, was having trouble dealing with their hope for a better future: their youth.

Los Dioses migrated to the city of Cartagena in 2013 due to economic pressure in Libertad. However, while the rest of the members stayed in Cartagena, Ralam returned to Libertad in 2014, ready to continue his music work locally. Things had changed in Libertad in the short time he was away. The Victims Unit had increased its presence as it implemented the Interlacing program. Communal organizational processes had improved, and the Victims Unit had invited the JPFO to participate in the Interlacing Program because they wanted representatives of the youth invovled in the reparation plan. Shortly after Ralam's return, the JPFO invited him to be part of the organization and to lead music activities in its program for youth. However, Jorge "El Mago" (The Mage), president of the JPFO, requested that Ralam change his aggressive lyrics so that his message and music leaned more towards peacebuilding and social reconstruction. This request led to Ralam to start a new music group in June 2015, the Afro-Música en los Montes de María (Afro-Música or AFM). As requested, the group started writing lyrics that moved away from *tiraera*, or socially critical messages with a confrontational tone, to *cultura*, or lyrics that acknowledge and remembered local cultural practices and culture specialists. This change marked an important transition in the expressive agency of these musicians, who shifted

from a posture of aggression and confrontation to one of empathy and nonviolence in order to convey a message of community development.

Photo 14. Afro-Música and Chabelo performing at a CRP meeting.

Afro-Música en los Montes de María (Afro-Música): Collective Musical Practice, Cultural Revival, and Bridges across Generations

When Luis Miguel joined the JPFO, this youth organization was already working not only with the Victims Unit, through the Interlacing Program, but also with regional NGO Sowing Peace, from Sincelejo, capital city of the Sucre Department. Mago (JPFO chair), Ralam, and other young members were nominated to become "weavers," thus participating in the Interlacing Program's capacity-building process, which, through workshops and other activities, aimed at empowering local leaders to strengthen community development. That process emphasized the idea of elders as repositories of traditional knowledges as well as the recovery of such local cultural expressions and practices.

The emergence of Afro-Música marks a new phase in the development of culture projects related to CRP in Libertad. The shift in the lyrics was accompanied by a process

of approaching local elders to pay respect and learn from them. This process embraced two strategies: first, attending meetings of the local elders' association to interview them in groups about the local cultural traditions; and second, establishing a long-standing collaboration with cultural leader Chabelo, turning her into an integral part of the AFM project. The members of AFM started attending the weekly meetings of the local elders' association, an interest group organized by local leader Mingo to guarantee the rights and access of the rural elderly to fair subsidies. In these meetings, the members of AFM presented their cultural project and activities publicly. They also conducted what amounted to collective memory workshops, where they asked the elders questions about the "old times" and customs, including food, clothing, music, dance, death rituals, local festivities, land tenure, local fauna, ecosystems, and so on. AFM members documented this information and utilized it to write new songs in which they present the knowledge the elders had given them. With this strategy, the members of AFM aimed at "storing" traditional knowledge in rap lyrics, which they then sang all over town. The strategy was partially successful, and many young people liked their songs, started following them, and learned the lyrics. The members of AFM wanted to safeguard traditional knowledge by presenting it in a "modern" package, more appealing to children and teenagers, the generation born during and after the violent occupation of Libertad.

The second strategy involved working with Chabelo. The first time she and AFM collaborated was in the making of a video of the AFM rap song "Memoria," which addressed the violent past and neglect for the elderly and traditional culture. The video starts with a *décima* chant by local singer Reinaldo Reyes, followed by the actual video of the song, in which Chabelo is portrayed as the teacher of an unruly classroom: students

disrespect her, deem her crazy, and eventually leave her alone. Later in the video, though, the students respond to the lyrics of the song, acknowledging the value of elders and their wisdom. The young students hug Chabelo, reconciling with her, and together they sing the song. The video finishes with documentary footage of Chabelo singing one of her songs *a capella*, "La vejez" ("The Old Age"), in which she claims that the elderly are the fashionable ones, who jump, sing, laugh, have fun, and dance.

This was the beginning of a creative process oriented towards cultural revival led by AFM and Chabelo. A prominent leader in the community, Chabelo, 62, has lived as a farmer her entire life. Today lives with her family in the Pondo neighborhood, one of the oldest in town. Her house has many of the characteristics of an older and more rural time: a large lot on the edges of which three of her children have already built their own households; a spacious inner patio with medicinal plants, orange and grapefruit trees, occasional yucca plants, and other crops; and a main kitchen that is the center of sociability, where coffee and food are prepared all day long. While the house proper has four rooms, where some of the sixteen children of Chabelo and many of her grandchildren sleep, the patio is where most activities take place, always surrounded by and/or involving the animals that live there as well: chicken, ducks, turkeys, dogs, cats, goats, donkeys, horses, doves, pigs, and turtles, most of which perform a productive function in the house. Chabelo has mastered local folklore throughout her life, playing with the adults at funerary wakes since the age of eight, dancing folkloric dances, and singing bullerengue and other more popular styles, such as vallenato and *ranchera* since a young age.

Ralam, 23, on the other hand, has never been a farmer and grew up during the occupation. At his house, there are plantain and papayas trees, a dog, and some pigs, but

he, his mother, his two younger brothers, and sister, are not farmers. He has been a musician, producer, radio presenter, educator, communal organizer, and occasional car washer (during his time in Cartagena). Deeply interested in local communal work, he also likes hip-hop and the perspective of an educated and dignified life in terms of development and overcoming poverty. Along with his mother, he started working with the CRP (Action 1, Measure 3) as director of the local radio station in 2012. The project did not last long because the equipment, which had been donated by USAID, broke and they could not fund its replacement or repair. At the radio station, Ralam communicated events and news to the community, also using the opportunity to talk about local issues, celebrate people's birthdays, and play music, including some of his own. He also utilized the studio to produce recordings for Los Dioses.

The common goal of strengthening the "ancestral things" (*cosas ancestras*) to rehabilitate the community brought these two leaders together. Both highly energetic and charismatic leaders, Ralam is a strong organizer of the youth and is creative in designing strategies to reach out to several sectors of the community. Chabelo, on the other hand, is a motherly but tough caretaker, an organizer as well as a master traditional knowledge bearer who is ready to share her knowledge and skills to take actions to meet their goals. When discussing strategies to spread their message across the community during December 2015, the members of AFM decided that their music had to move around town to accompany important events, just like the old-school bullerengue drums and dance troupes used to do. They decided to conduct public street performances to expose more people to their music and message.

At the beginning, they did that while carrying their PA system around town on their shoulders and asking neighbors for electricity. During this initial phase of the AFM project, their musical performances were conducted by a group of twenty-five young singers and one DJ, who played the samples through his phone. They wrote the lyrics collectively, although with support from Ralam and the most experienced songwriters in the group, and distributed the lead vocal parts so that each song featured several different members of the band. This itinerant strategy of outreach in the community was useful. Nonetheless members of the group also had been wondering how to align their music be more closely with local traditions, beyond the idea of street performance as a public empathy-building music practice, core to the performance of bullerengue and other local traditional musics.

Aware of the need to engage more directly with the sound and performing aspects of local musics, AFM requested outside support because the only traditional drummer in town, elder Miguel Sarmiento, 89, was blind and sick, and thus unable to teach the younger generations. There is an one-generation gap in Libertad, people now aged between twenty-five and fifty who did not learn to play or sing bullerengue or other drum-based local styles. As I have written previously, bullerengue is

> one the most persistent Afro-Colombian music and dance forms from the Caribbean region. Its origins can be traced back to colonial times and its aesthetics have influenced many other regional musical styles. It consists of a repertoire of chants with a call-and-response structure, where a crowded and predominantly female chorus responds to solo singers, who sing verses and *lereos* (a specific kind of lament), while clapping to the downbeats of the music. Two hand-drums accompany the chants: the *llamador*, which plays a steady supporting musical part, and the *tambor alegre*, which plays the master-drum part and varies in its rhythmic intensity and volume according, primarily, to the conduction of the chants. The performance is completed with one dancing couple that interacts actively with the master-drummer, performing dances that correspond to the drumming parts. A minimum of four people can perform bullerengue with all its components, but

> groups are usually larger and can grow to up to twenty. These ensembles still perform for private celebrations in houses and for formalized public events in diverse kinds of venues. This music was mostly used for popular celebrations, and consumption of alcohol in the frame of the performance is not only common but also expected. Mainly because of this, elder *bullerengueros* state that it in the past it was a practice conducted by adults: minors were rarely allowed into the performance context. (Rojas 2013: 28)

In Libertad, only a few elders, like Chabelo or Miguel Sarmiento, still embody that traditional knowledge. In 2015, the hiring of a gaita and bullerengue music teacher was announced as part of a plan to start a music education process in Libertad in the framework of the CRP (Measure 3, Action 1), but those efforts have never materialized. At the time, it was hard for these young musicians to learn the local styles on their own. Chabelo did everything in her power to support them, but she does not play the drums, and elderly Miguel could not do it either. Aware of the desire of AFM to get closer to the traditional styles, Bogotá-based music producer Simón González, at the time working for the Victims Unit in the Collective Reparation area, had the idea of putting together a hip-hop beat that included elements of traditional *cumbia* and bullerengue to donate to AFM as a personal gift. Simón told them that he was giving them the sample with the condition that they make a relevant song with it. If, when he returned to the community a month later, the song was ready, he would prepare another beat for them.

The result was a song that became a huge local hit and marked the transition of AFM towards a new phase in which it engaged fully in a local process of musical and cultural revival. The name of the song, "Bullenrap," is a clever mix of the words bullerengue and rap. In it the beats of a funky drum set—along with *maracas*, *tambora*, llamador, and *tambor alegre* from the traditional drums ensemble—are followed by a

bullerengue song written by Chabelo, with a traditional structure of call and response and the melodic contours characteristic of this music style.

Ay bullerengue mamá	Aye, bullerengue mama
¡Bullerengue pa gozá!	Bullerengue to enjoy!
Este bullerengue fue nacido	This bullerengue was born
En el pueblo de Libertad	In the town of Libertad

While in the original version of this bullerengue, the first two lines are a choral "response," and the last two a solo "call," in "Bullenrap" all of it became the chorus of the song, which is sung twice every four verses. Immediately after this first chorus, Ralam comes in with infectious hip-hop rhymes praising local food and explaining how the innovations in tradition do not erode culture, but make it evolve for current times:

Desde la tierra del sancocho de pescao	From the land of fish soup (*sancocho*)
Traemos por todo lao	We bring everywhere
Este bullerengue rapiao	This rapped bullerengue
Y este ritmo no afecta la cultura	This rhythm does not affect culture
Solo la evoluciona	It just makes it evolve
Para la edad futura	For the age future

Four of the main members of AFM sing throughout the song, and Chabelo's presence is most dominant during the chorus: the timbre of her voice and her singing style stand out. When AFM showed Simón this song, during the next monthly visit of people working within the Interlacing Program, he and the Victims Unit multimedia team decided to record the song and produce a video. Already there to document and accompany the November 2 All Souls celebration (*día de los difuntos*), they had the equipment to do it. On All Souls day 2015, the song was recorded track by track in Ralam's house, using his bedroom as a recording studio. Video footage was shot all over town throughout the day with three cameras and one artistic director: Colombian independent rock and pop

producer Antonio Alarcón, also known as Rolo. They finalized the song and video with high-quality production standards in professional studios in Bogotá. By the time the video came back to the community after a few months, the "Bullenrap" had already been a tremendous local hit for weeks, and people of all ages knew the lyrics and sang the song around town.[21]

"Bullenrap" was more than a song, though. It also came to stand for a musical genre with the same name, bullenrap. This new genre of bullenrap became a cornerstone of AFM's project of reviving local culture by focusing on local traditional cultural practices as well as on the fusion of these elements with contemporary musical styles. The first few days of November 2015 were instrumental in the development of this local musical genre, and I played a role in this music project. On the morning of November 2, the same day the video was shot, the multimedia team also scheduled a visit to the house of elder bullerengue singer and drummer Miguel Sarmiento.

I had met "Migue" almost two years earlier, during my first visit to Libertad in January 2014. I visited this locality the first time during a folkloric festival organized by the Victims Unit and some Bogotá NGOs and volunteers, who attempted to spark cultural revival processes, but failed due to excessive outside support (preventing the initiative from becoming "grassroots" because its main initiators and organizers were not people from the local community). This massive event lasted two days, and, even though it had only an indirect impact on the processes of local organization and culture projects, it helped make elder traditional culture specialists, such as Migue, visible on stage. That time, along with other musicians and music researchers from the Bogotá NGO Rooted

[21] A videoclip of the song can be accessed on Youtube: https://youtu.be/qv5a8FuCr4o.

Sounds (*Sonidos Enraizados*) and several local leaders, I visited Migue, I brought drums to play bullerengue with him to inspire him to sing and play again after decades of retirement from music. The experience was also powerful because of the presence of bullerengue master and regional cultural authority, Emilsen Pacheco, as well as that of Migue's music friend from forty years ago, gaita master Sixto Silgado, "Paíto," who arrived in town that afternoon to participate in the festival. We played music for hours, and Migue played the drum and sang his songs. The visit was a success. Migue was excited, and we convinced him to perform on stage that night, with other musicians and me as his backing band.

Almost two years later, on the morning of November 2, 2015, I, members of AFM, and a new Victims Unit team (who did not know Migue personally) visited him to record material for a short documentary for a Victims Unit website. I brought my *alegre* drum with me, because of the vivid and powerful memories of my previous experience in Migue's house. We arrived with around eight people from the Victims Unit, a crowd of locals, and the members of AFM. The group said hello to Migue, and I re-introduced myself. He remembered me, and, as I started playing the drum, he started singing a bullerengue tune. Singing from his chair, Migue encouraged the rest of people to "respond" (sing the chorus), and one other community member improvised the llamador drum part with a gallon container. We played music for about half an hour. During that time, I played bullerengue drum parts on the alegre drum, the lead drum, which I had been playing for over thirteen years, participating in many bullerengue festivals with my Bogotá group, La Rueda. As I drummed, I noticed that the young AFM people were checking me out. As soon as we finished, several of them approached me to ask me to teach them the traditional drumming styles. I agreed to do so, and over the following month and a half we

conducted eight workshops specifically dedicated to developing beginning techniques and rhythms associated with traditional Afro-Colombian drumming of the Caribbean region.

In Chapter 4, I will discuss in more detail my role as an activist or engaged researcher in Libertad, especially in relation to my becoming a temporary music teacher and facilitator for AFM. For now, however, I will summarize the events that followed by saying that, because of these workshops and the passion and discipline of these young musicians, I witnessed two key transformations in this local music project over the course of my visits in 2015 and 2016. First, AFM had stopped using recorded beats altogether; they now were accompanying their songs with traditional drums; and second, they had started a daily process of music education with local children, completely *ad honorem*, teaching kids some of the basic drumming techniques they learned from me. As they continued working without pause, involving in their activities the elderly and the children from several neighborhoods and engaging in cultural revival and educational activities, the members of AFM began breaking down previous stereotypes and establishing relationships of trust with the local CRP leaders who had marginalized them in the past. Months of daily work with local children, public street performances, and collective creative processes had positioned AFM as an important player in the CRP and garnered them support from outside institutions like the Victims Unit and the regional NGO Sowing Peace.

Photo 15. Members of Afro-Música at a local Elders' Association meeting.

Music Practices, Third-Party Institutions, and the Articulation of Local Leadership

Despite collective reparation plans aimed at facilitating sustainable communities and mitigating damages caused by conflict, the goal of attaining "collective reparation" has thus far proven unattainable. The financial context of the program suggests that the budget of this national program is inadequate to meet current needs. For instance, there are more than three hundred Collective Reparation Subjects listed on the National Victims Registry; for each of these social groups, there is a plan for ten years of continued investment costing around ten million dollars each (approximately three billion dollars total; Gil 2017). Trying to solve this paradox, civil society, multilateral organizations and private-sector organizations often participate in and provide funding for the processes. Several outside institutions and organizations (which I call "third-party") have provided additional support to Libertad's CRP, especially to local leadership and grassroots organizations. Among the organizations that recently have played roles in CRP music-related activities, including

those related to youth empowerment and leadership, donations of musical instruments, music workshops, and so on, are the following:

The United Nations International Organization for Migrations (IOM): This multilateral organization was involved in the first phase of CRP, as well as in the transition from NCRR to the Victims Unit. IOM members participated in core aspects of the CRP, including workshops and assemblies that led to program design. In relation to music, IOM provided equipment for the communal radio station that was managed by Ralam and his mother in 2011-2012. Ralam's music group Los Dioses used this audio equipment to produce and record hip-hop beats and songs.

Dunna Foundation: This organization implements peacebuilding workshops in marginalized communities in Colombia through two media: yoga, and dance and movement. Dunna workshops in Libertad in 2012 and 2013 were instrumental for the recognition of the importance of arts and culture in the process of communal organization. During the Dunna workshops, the idea of a local festival was conceived; this festival was going to include traditional music and dance as well as sound-system champeta[22] music, with the goal of reducing intergenerational tensions through an inclusive *fiesta*.

Circular Origin (Origen Circular): Led by Felipe Medina, a former Dunna worker who participated in the above-mentioned workshops and was inspired by the festival idea, this Bogotá-based NGO organized the "1st Ecological Bullerengue and Tambora Festival for Peace in Libertad." This event took place January 3-5, 2014, to commemorate the town's founding. The festival was the first celebration in many years that included local traditional music practices, catering them to the entire community. The main square was

[22] *Champeta* is a local incarnation of music influenced by Pan-Caribbean/West-African popular dance music genres, such as *soukous,* highlife*, zouk, juju,* dancehall*, socca,* afro-beat, *kompa*, and others.

full every night. Some Victims Unit officials, though, criticized the effort, saying that relying on a larger volunteer force from Bogotá led to the community not getting fully involved in the organization, thus making the event more "assistentialist" in nature. Not developing local sense of belonging and/or identity with the festival prevented the stimulation of local organizational capacity in subsequent years. An assistentialist approach to socioeconomic development usually involves a more "developed" patron that, through its own logic, imposes development practices in marginalized and disempowered communities without necessarily accounting for local decision-making processes; it is conceived of as a form of "assistance" rather than as mutually cooperative work.

Rooted Sounds Cultural Corporation (Corporación Cultural Sonidos Enraizados): I have been working with this Bogotá-based cultural organization since 2015, although we have collaborated on several occasions since 2009. This NGO's work focuses on promotion, touring, media products, and community development projects related to traditional musicians and music practices from diverse regions of Colombia, with a focus on Afro-Colombian musical traditions. During the 2014 Libertad festival, I assisted Rooted Sounds with the on-site recording of an album of local festival performers. At that time, AFM did not yet exist and Ralam was in Cartagena, but Chabelo participated on four songs for the album. In the second half of 2016, Rooted Sounds received a grant from the Ministry of Culture of Colombia to conduct bullerengue workshops in Libertad and two other localities, with traditional master-drummer Emilsen Pacheco. Chabelo, AFM, and around sixty local children were the main beneficiaries of these workshops, coordinated by this NGO and the local Afro-Colombian Communal Council.

Colombian Women's Initiative for Peace–WIP (Iniciativa de Mujeres Colombianas por la Paz, or IMP): This Bogotá-based NGO started approaching the Libertad community with the idea of providing legal counsel to female victims of war crimes committed during the occupation. When they noticed the tense situation in relation to issues of leadership and representation, the group decided to broaden its workshops to leaders of all local organizations to help them strengthen their positions in their interactions with the state. WIP intentionally included younger leadership as a way of making the case for the JPFO and other young organizations.

Sowing Peace (Sembrando Paz): The Sincelejo-based regional organization has conducted peacebuilding work in the María Mountains region for about twenty years. With support from the international Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), the group currently operates in four Collective Reparation Subjects, including Libertad. In each community, the organization has a resident young person, which changes every two years, as part of the MCC's international Seeds program. Sowing Peace is one the organizations with greater presence in the community. One of its goals is supporting the young leaders through the JPFO and AFM. Through the support of this NGO, AFM has travelled regionally to perform at events, and many of its members have participated in communal organization and development workshops.

Negrita Films, Canal 13 and César López: Through an alliance between the filmmaking company Negrita Films, the TV channel Canal 13, and famous Colombian music and nonviolence performer and songwriter César López, the campaign "RE, When music speaks to us" (*RE, Cuando la música nos habla*) has donated over one hundred musical instruments in five departments, including Sucre, and benefitted over 600 people.

Some of the instruments that have been given to Libertad include a set of traditional drums (tambora, tambor alegre, llamador, and *guache*), a keyboard, an electro-acoustic guitar, a wireless microphone, and a simple PA system. These instruments have been fundamental for the development of AFM's local music project: these young musicians previously did not have any drums or the means to buy or make them. Since receiving the instruments in December 2015, they have used them every day (some of them have already broken and been replaced) to practice their songs and rhythms, improvise, or teach local children about bullerengue and traditional drum culture.

Cabildo Cultural Corporation (Corporación Cultural Cabildo): Founded and chaired by renowned traditional music promoter and cultural entrepreneur Rafael Ramos, this Cartagena-based regional organization includes regional Afro-Colombian performers in its established folkloric drums and dance company Tambores del Cabildo. I call Tambores del Cabildo a "folkloric" company to highlight its stage-performance and urban show-business orientation, and to distinguish it from other kinds of traditional arts performance that are linked to local ritual or other local social functions. The Cabildo NGO is the Ministry of Culture's regional operator for educational programs in traditional music and dance. Recently, Ralam was hired by Cabildo to develop a folkloric dance school for children and teenagers in Libertad as part of a larger Ministry of Culture regional post-conflict program called Sensorial Expedition (Expedición Sensorial). This program aims at implementing post-agreement cultural policies, part of the development of policy reforms undertaken by all state institutions to address the new "post-conflict" era.[23] This process, as well as the involvement of several levels of the state, will be more thoroughly explained in Chapter 5.

[23] "Post-agreement" refers to the period after the signing of the "Final Agreement for the Termination of Conflict" between FARC and the Colombian government in 2016.

In addition, several state institutions have provided important support to AFM. Chabelo's and Ralam's leadership and the hard work of all AFM members, especially their creativity and capacity to facilitate empathy through strategic music practices, are what ultimately make this project impactful. An idea addressed by the members of AFM to convey "empathy" is *compartir* (to share), which they use to convey not only the idea of sharing time and activities together, but also to the idea of sharing a specific mood and intention: that is, sharing a common ground and keeping people united in their emotions. One consequence of AFM's impact has been their increasing status in the CRP governance process. Nonetheless, it is important to understand the role of institutional *acompañamiento* (or "accompaniment"), a term used in participatory-development and capacity-building work that literally means to accompany the process of social transformation of a community by specifically avoiding patronizing relationships and generic models for socioeconomic development and, instead, engaging in more horizontal relationships that address local needs. Without these processes, AFM would not have such a great impact. Despite problems inherent in the top-down decision-making practices characteristic of institutional programs, the CRP processes are designed to function with a more dialogical approach. The Ministry of Culture's Sensorial Expedition, a program implemented during 2016 and 2017 in the entire Montes de María region, including Libertad, was more like an arts-based intervention, one based on regional folkloric dance troupes and with a clearly vertical structure. Interactions with other state institutions, such as the San Onofre mayor's office or the Sucre governor's office, are scarce, and the young leaders do not feel supported or represented by them.

The young AFM musicians are an empowered group, and their multilevel social capital has allowed them to gain influence in the CRP. Theorists such as Christiaan Grootaert argue that "linking" social capital is fundamental for social mobility because it entails the capacity to interact constructively with authority figures (Grootaert 2003: 5-7). Other scholars prefer the more flexible idea of multilevel social capital, which refers to relationships of trust, cooperation, and solidarity among organized groups that belong to diverse levels of scale and political authority. Brodizio, Ostrom, and Young, for example, claim that social ecosystems face challenges that sometimes pertain to the local level, and sometimes to the global level, therefore, arguing that multilevel social capital is the key to efficiently governing social ecosystems (Brodizio, Ostrom, and Young 2009).

The members of AFM maintain cooperative relations not only with several local organizations—such as the Elders' Association, the Afro-Colombian Communal Council, and Libertad Educative Institution, among others—but also regional ones (Sowing Peace, Cabildo), national ones (Dunna, Rooted Sounds, WIP), international ones (IOM), and national government institutions (the Victims Unit, the Ministry of Culture). The members of AFM proactively engage with members of these organizations not only when they visit Libertad but also when they are away. They call them, write messages to their social media, empathize with them, and often invite them to hang out beyond official work schedules, making efforts to develop a strong bond with these functionaries, who visit only a few days every few months. They always accompany their activities with live music, showing off their creativity, energy, and improvisational skills. I argue that building this multilevel social capital is intentional and is one aspect that has enabled this local music

project to challenge its previous exclusion and to permeate the circle of local leadership of the CRP, managed by the Impulse Committee and the Victims Unit.

When AFM started using traditional drums, arranging music in more traditional bullerengue and gaita styles, writing cultura lyrics, conducting itinerant performances in every neighborhood of the community, and, especially, teaching the children to play traditional musics, the attitudes of the Impulse Committee progressively changed. I became aware of this transformation during a meeting between members of the Victims Unit and the Impulse Committee about funding and the future implementation of music projects described in CRP (such as the hiring of a music teacher, which is yet to happen) on April 25, 2016. Ten members of the Impulse Committee attended, as well as four Victims Unit officials, the members of AFM, and other local leaders such as Yamil Caraballo, an acknowledged leader elected to the San Onofre city council. Yamil and some of his closest friends and collaborators had been some of the greatest opponents to the AFM project in the past because they saw it as an example of the continuation of values that had brought destruction to the community. However, that morning, Yamil spoke words of support and admiration for AFM, saying that Ralam had approached him to request that they work together, asking to forgive and forget the previous tensions between them. In Yamil's own words, this humbled him. He also praised their efforts in the cultural revival of traditional musics and their commitment to teaching the children. Yamil also spoke words of support for my own work facilitating music workshops and providing guidance to the AFM project.

AFM was scheduled to play a couple of songs at the end of the meeting. Ralam was not in town, as he was attending a workshop in Sincelejo, so Mr. Edins, the second in

command at the time, led the band in that performance. The group played one of its bullenrap songs: "A pie pelao" ("Going Barefoot").[24] This was not unusual, as AFM used to play music at the end of some meetings or events because they were the only active music group in town. Many institutional events between 2014 and 2016 featured live music because program officials and community workers wanted to utilize it as a marker of cultural development or to assuage the tense and difficult atmosphere of these meetings. This day was different, however, because when AFM started performing its song, the older members of the Impulse Committee and other local leaders started cheering and clapping, connecting with the musicians and the music. Excitement grew when two members of the Impulse Committee, Viola and Mingo, got up from their chairs and jumped in front of the musicians to dance traditional bullerengue and cheer the drummers. The fact that AFM's performance moved members of the local leadership to the point of dancing at a meeting marks a transformation in the way that these leaders related to, understood, and connected with AFM's music project.[25]

From that moment on, AFM's relationship with the Impulse Committee and the Afro-Colombian Communal Council, the two major communal representative bodies, grew stronger. Members of AFM were more frequently invited to participate in larger communal projects, and their participation became central to meetings, events, and projects related to music and community arts. Recognition by the older leaders allowed AFM and myself to submit grant proposals that needed official approval of the Communal Council. We applied for two grants from Ministry of Culture programs: 1) the Afro-Colombian Decade program, to get Chabelo recognized as guardian of Afro-Colombian traditional knowledge

[24] The video of this song, which Colombian artist Camilo Conde and I produced with AFM in June 2016, is available at https://youtu.be/kVwePhGnRZU.
[25] Excerpts from this moment can be seen here https://youtu.be/caY70NQzIfM.

in the "ancestral rituals" category; and 2) the National Artistic Internships program, to conduct a series of bullerengue workshops with the NGO Rooted Sounds and master-drummer Emilsen Pacheco in Libertad and two other localities. We won both grants, and the projects had a tangible positive impact on the development of this local music project. Also, as explained earlier, Ralam was hired by the Cabildo Cultural Corporation to create and train two local folkloric dance troupes as part of the larger framework of the Sensorial Expedition, the Ministry of Culture's prime post-conflict program in the María Mountains. I will discuss these developments further in Chapter 5, analyzing the ways a local cultural project in a CRP reflects deeper assumptions and tensions about the roles of musics and musical practices in peacebuilding initiatives from a national perspective.

Photo 16. Ralam talking at the Cartagena International Film Festival (FICCI) in 2016. On the left is Paula Gaviria, the national director of the Victims Unit at the time.

Conclusions

Peacebuilding is often seen as the process of reconciling violent conflict between two parties. In Libertad's post-conflict alleviation phase, I also see peacebuilding as a process of building trust between community members. After the occupation, the local social ecosystem was fragmented and swarming with internal tensions. Many community members acknowledge the emergence of social problems, such as increases in substance abuse, crime, and gang activity among the youth. These "secondary conflicts," as I call them, can be defined as tensions in social groups that emerge as consequences of the previous larger violent confrontation between two parties, although they do not necessarily involve armed violence. These conflicts usually emerge among different groups of unarmed civilians, all of them victims of previous conflicts, whose lives and relationships have been affected by war. Secondary conflicts also need to be dealt with from a peacebuilding perspective. Programs such as Interlacing, within the Victims Unit, are one way of approaching this issue ("rehabilitation of the social fabric") in the context of collective reparation initiatives.

Historically, the community of Libertad has shown a capacity for collective response aimed at transforming its social reality in moments of intense pressure. The foundation of Libertad in the early 1930s is one such instance. At that time, dispossessed farmers from surrounding areas, forced by large regional landowners (*terratenientes*) into cheap agricultural labor, organized themselves to occupy lands that were not being used to work fields for themselves and their families. This attempt had as its ultimate goal the granting of such lands to them by the state. The recently elected Enrique Olaya Herrera liberal government supported agrarian reform policies, challenging an entrenched

conservative hegemony that for forty-four years (1886-1930) had kept the lands in the hands of historically wealthy families, perpetuating class divisions and inequality (García Caraballo 2008). Landlords, police, and illegal armed actors harassed these Afro-Colombian farmers for years to prevent them from working and living in the "invaded" fields that are today the town of Libertad. These lands were "vacant lands" (*baldíos*) owned by the state, but terratenientes unrightfully claimed them as theirs and made many of Libertad's founders spend time in jail. Called Mambú in earlier times, in August 1937 the Farmers League of Mambú received written notice from the central government, granting them rights of possession to the lands (Resolution No. 000117, August 21st, 1937). After that day, they started calling the recently legalized town Libertad.

In a moment of intense social stress, when families needed farmland to survive, community members organized themselves to transform what they considered an unjust situation. The same thing can be said about the liberation from the paramilitaries in 2004. The occupiers' abuse surpassed the patience of the people, pushing a situation that made community members feel the urgent need to transform their reality by taking collective action to resist a framework that had exploited them for years. In many ways, we also can argue that the development of the now thriving local music project AFM is backed by the same spirit of organized collective action towards social transformation. As the members of AFM saw through the prejudice inflicted on them, they acted to transform it. The established communal leadership was not going to make concessions to youth participation until they had evidence that AFM was indeed conducting productive communal work towards advancing the goals of the CRP. The only way AFM could prove themselves was through effective, visible, and committed communal work that the leaders could witness.

CHAPTER 4
BULLENRAP AND TRADITION: CREATIVITY, EMPOWERMENT, AND APPLIED ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

It was a warm and cozy evening of mid-November 2015. I was heading down Calle Balsa in Libertad, towards the house of María, Paloma, and Mile, three sisters who participate in the local band Afro-Música en los Montes de María (Afro-Música or AFM). The band members and I had scheduled a rehearsal. In two weeks, we were going to play a showcase performance for promoters at the Caribbean Cultural Market (CCM) in the city of Cartagena, one of the most important business expos for music and dance projects in Colombia. The Victims Unit was covering all travel expenses for this gig, and they had asked if I would train the band members in aspects of show production and accompany them as tour manager. Twelve members of AFM, including the elder Isabel Martínez "Chabelo," were already in the house when I arrived. After we discussed what we would work on that evening, we moved outside and set up their one-speaker PA system on the porch. While AFM's member JM prepared his cellphone to play samples of their hip-hop repertoire, I drew a line on the dirt ground marking a rectangular area of about nine feet by twenty feet, simulating the area of a stage. As we had discussed, we structured a choir line of around eight members in the back, evoking the staging of a bullerengue performance. Chabelo and Ralam were in front of the choir, and other solo singers jumped to the front when it was their turn to sing. There was excitement in the group about embarking on this new adventure. We started the rehearsal with the song "Bullenrap" and followed it with "Por las lágrimas" ("By the Tears").

When the loud amplified sound of hip-hop beats hit the streets of the Pondo neighborhood, people of all ages came to check out what was going on. The members of AFM had organized their positions within the rectangle I had drawn. Chabelo was wearing her *pollera* (traditional bullerengue skirt), lead singers were holding short sticks to simulate microphones, and I was directing the rehearsal and videotaping the experience. They started "Bullenrap" with emotion and gusto, as if they were already in Cartagena, even though this was just our first rehearsal for that show. It had been two weeks since the recording of this song and its popularity was rising because a "rough mix" had been circulating locally. People in town were becoming familiar with the song and recognized it immediately. Children gathered around the band, and adults were watching from their porches. It was already around five thirty in the evening, and dusk was turning the brightness of the Caribbean sun into an orange-pink flow of light that bathed the moment, making this event a poetic symbol of song and transition. The singers, wearing their "urban" style outfits, accompanied their rhymes with energetic and rhythmic hand gestures. The choir members in the back moved to a simple but powerful and coordinated bullerengue dance step, and Chabelo waved her pollera, dancing bullerengue to rap music in the center of the "stage."

At that point in the history of AFM, spectators and people from the Pondo neighborhood were still getting familiar with the spontaneity of this proactive group of young local artists. The rehearsal felt like a public street performance, and the musicians addressed their audience in the same way. It was an out-of-the-ordinary event, and people clapped, cheered, and made positive comments after each song. This was the opening of a new door for these young Liberteño cultural leaders; it was the first time that their project

was being officially recognized by the Victims Unit as a cultural group responsible for representing the community in an important national-level cultural event. They were aware that what made this possible was their artistic creativity, their communal work, and their collective expressions (bullenrap). At the time, I hung out with AFM every day and participated on many occasions in collective activities performed to strengthening their process of local organization. All these novelties created a sense of hope among us that boosted our motivation to continue with the work ahead. After that first rehearsal, the members of AFM decided that they wanted to continue collaborating with me, and we scheduled several other practices before our trip to Cartagena.

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The development of bullenrap, a recently created musical genre in Libertad, has challenged essentializing notions about local culture. Bullenrap is a bold but creative fusion that features sounds of local, traditional drum-and-chant music with contemporary hip-hop and other urban Caribbean raps, beats, and melodies. Its creators intentionally chose this aesthetic as a nonviolent strategy to address local intergenerational tensions. AFM and its bullenrap music project started with the aim of facilitating a culture of peace through collaborative music-making, sharing experiences related to their daily lives and traditions, and enhancing communal cohesion. The construction of bullenrap also involved a process of capacity building within the local music collective Afro-Música. This recently constructed musical practice, which has at least the partial support of the local Collective Reparation Plan (CRP), has had positive effects on the community. It exemplifies one way in which strategic musical and artistic creativity can contribute resilience to local peacebuilding processes. The role of creativity and empathy in such situations should not

be underestimated, especially when addressed through careful and conscious artistic and cultural design, as is the case with AFM, the focus on this chapter.

In this chapter, I will explain how my participation in this process meshed with both my documentation of local organizational processes as well as the grassroots agency and capacity of local musicians and leaders in accomplishing their goals. By "grassroots agency and capacity" I refer to the power of local social groups to make decisions about collective actions, as well as their ability to follow through those actions without the interference of outside parties. In fact, that the members of AFM would strategically identify, request, and use resources from outside collaborators like myself shows their proactivity and strategies of empowerment. Both the construction of bullenrap as a music genre and the actions of AFM as a music collective demonstrate how a calculated and creative blending of cultural ideas and practices can engage an intergenerational local audience, simultaneously working to mitigate previously identified social tensions. As peacebuilding is a process of social and cultural transformation, it is also expected that local and traditional cultural resources change when they are involved at the core of these processes. Careful balance between "tradition," seen by older community members as *las cosas ancestras* ("the ancestral things"), and modern popular culture, with which many younger people identify, was key to creating common ground among community members and, thus, to making bullenrap a powerful and unifying social symbol.

Before Bullenrap: Hip-Hop and Capacity Building

With the arrival of collective reparation initiatives to Libertad, local leaders and program officials have made conscious efforts to re-dignify local Afro-Colombian identities. Measure 8 of the CRP entails the "recovery and strengthening of the political,

sociocultural, and traditional organization of the Communal Council of Libertad" (IOM 2012b: 3). Per Law 70 of 1997, the state recognizes as legitimate the communal councils of Afro-Colombian communities. Embracing a "differential approach" to policy, the CRP facilitated the creation of the Consejo Comunitario Afro-Colombiano Nuevo Horizonte de Libertad (Libertad's New Horizon Afro-Colombian Communal Council; hereafter, Consejo Comunitario), the local entity responsible for representing the local black majority in government-related issues. Among the core values of the Consejo Comunitario are the defense of local Afro-Colombian culture and collective lands and the exchange of experiences with other Afro-Colombian Consejos Comunitarios, regionally and nationally. Although the community lacked financial and social capital to articulate those cultural processes as part of a larger project in the beginning, their work has already led to increased awareness of local traditions and cultural expressions,

Over time, this drive towards recovering ethnic and cultural dignity sparked the first actions towards a revival of local traditional practices in Libertad, supported by local organizations and institutional programs. Local cultural leaders, such as Chabelo, initiated these actions to construct "local culture" as a category that soon became part of the CRP and other institutional programs. This approach to cultural revival reached a climax with the "First Ecological Bullerengue and Tambora Festival for Peace," organized by the Bogotá NGO Origen Circular (Circular Origin), in January 2014 (briefly described in Chapter 3), although programs featuring such activities as dramas, funerary wake reenactments, and performances of local games had also been employed previously within the CRP. The idea of the festival originated collectively among community members and program officials during an arts-and-peacebuilding workshop facilitated by the Fundación

Dunna, as part of the CRP. Despite the festival's apparent success and massive attendance, community members had not begun viewing the festival as their own due to excessive outside third-party involvement in the festival logistics and organization. This became evident in the attitude of the leaders the following year when Victims Unit officials reminded them about organizing the second annual festival; they were waiting for Origen Circular to arrive to town to organize it again. Despite the short-term impact of the two-day program, which primarily featured local artists, this was the first time in decades that all locally acknowledged cultural expressions and performers had a space to present their work to the whole community. Thus, despite not having had a direct follow-up program, this festival was an initial spark of cultural revival. It helped vanishing local musical expressions (such as bullerengue and gaita musics) regain strength in people's embodied collective memories. After this festival, people talked, gossiped, and commented about the event for several months. The festival and public discourse about it refreshed the collective memory of traditional drum-and-chant musical expressions in Libertad.

Hip-hop, on the other hand, had already become a vibrant musical tradition in the Caribbean region of Colombia in recent years. In fact, there is an established regional tradition of Caribbean popular dance music styles that have been influenced in various degrees by other Caribbean musics and by American hip-hop. Many highly popular musics from the region—such as *meneíto* and dancehall from the early 1980's, as well as diverse forms of afrobeat, *ragga*, reguetón and Colombian champeta musics—have incorporated aspects of rap music, especially the singing style, in their compositions and arrangements (Rivera 1998, Birenbaum 2005: 205). The city of Cartagena has had an established presence in regional mainstream radio stations for decades, and it has been a stronghold for

this so-called "urban Caribbean music." Cartagena has an active music industry that produces thousands of recordings and sound system shows per year—especially reguetón, champeta, and related music genres (Pacini Hernandez 1996). The sound system culture in Cartagena is dynamic and can be seen as parallel to the emergence of sound systems in the city of Kingston, Jamaica, a few decades earlier, where these mobile audio equipment systems became the main way to circulate and distribute certain kinds of popular music (such as dancehall) that were not fully accepted by the radio stations at that moment (Stolzoff 2000: 41-63).

Ethnomusicologist Deborah Pacini Hernandez accounts for this process, analyzing the influence of these Afro-Diasporic music styles in the 1970s—called simply *música africana* (African music) by locals—in the construction of contemporary local culture. She concludes that the adoption of this bundle of Afro-Caribbean styles (many of which included rap in their musical performance) is related to a local process of Afro-Colombian ethnic-identity construction. At the time, Afro-Colombian Caribbean popular musics styles (such as *porro* and cumbia) were seen as having been co-opted by the hegemonic and Eurocentric music industry, which was blamed for "whitening" them, thus sparking a separation between Afro-Colombian people and the more commercial and already internationally successful versions of Colombian Caribbean popular music. During this time, Afro-Colombian people in Cartagena and surrounding areas started consuming more and more música africana, especially through neighborhood sound-system dance parties (Pacini Hernandez 1996).

Despite their huge commercial success in the Caribbean, rap-influenced musics tend to be associated in popular culture with "an aura of shadiness and marginality"

(Rivera 1998: 124, my translation). In an analysis of Puerto Rican rap, which can be used to understand a parallel situation in Caribbean Colombia, Raquel Rivera argues that these assumptions about the music, which come from outside of the hip-hop communities, arise because it has been embraced by one of the most marginal populations in the country: black, young, and poor people. She argues that, in the struggles of young people defending their political rights, the adoption and use of hip-hop (and related genres) play an important role in the protests and mobilizations of these populations; they are the artists, cultural workers, and audience that constitute this scene. In Puerto Rico, as well as in Colombia, rap is not included within official narratives of what is usually considered "national culture." Since for decades this music has blended with other Afro-Diasporic musics and traditions from the Caribbean, some scholars see it as incompatible with Hispanic-Caribbean heritage (Rivera 1998).

Photo 17. El Danny, a picó sound system in Libertad playing a street dance party during the November 11 Carnival celebrations in 2015. The foreground shows the large size of the speakers.

Belonging to this larger movement of Caribbean adoption of rap-influenced dance music styles, Ralam participated in a hip-hop workshop for local youth in San Onofre around 2006. This workshop was facilitated by the Colombian NGO La Familia Ayara (The Ayara Family), a well-known Bogotá-based organization that aims at fostering peaceful coexistence, security values, and citizen participation through hip-hop training with young people from vulnerable communities. They focus on using the diverse elements of hip-hop culture, such as rap, graffiti, deejaying, and breakdance, as tools for social transformation by creating spaces for dialogue, expression, and reflection (Familia Ayara, website).[26] This workshop was a transformational event for Ralam, who, knowing of the reputation and work of the organization's founder Don Popo Ayara, took what he learnt seriously. He started writing and singing hip-hop songs from an early age, influenced by the work of La Familia Ayara. Later, during high school (2011-2012), Ralam became the manager of the CRP-sponsored community radio station. In addition to his duties as programmer, technician, deejay, and journalist, Ralam used the studio to produce hip-hop songs for a new group he had formed with his peer Andrés Del Toro of Los Dioses (The Gods). With this band, Ralam began his activities related to music for social change, expressing direct messages in his lyrics, including strong critiques of local conditions and sometimes confronting local leaders. This strategy proved Ralam's leadership to the community, but it also earned him a few detractors and foes.

After graduating from high school, members of Los Dioses traveled to Cartagena looking to increase their income and professional opportunities as musicians. But life in the big city was harder than expected, and, after one year of a salary far below minimum

[26] http://www.ayara.com.co/quienes-somos

wage while dealing with poor living and working conditions, Ralam went back to Libertad. There he discovered a recently implemented CRP, as well as plenty of opportunities for his musical projects to continue evolving.

Photo 18. Afro-Música during the recording of the "A pie pelao" ("Going Barefoot") video.

Bullenrap: The Recipe and its Methods

As a musical expression, what the members of AFM call bullenrap is a concoction of diverse social and performance practices, musical sound traits, and an aesthetic concept that blends what is considered "local," "traditional," and "rural" culture with what they see as "international," "modern," and "urban" expressions of youth. This formula involves a number of practices that I found to be important within AFM's local music project oriented towards the rehabilitation of social cohesion. Among these practices, in this section I describe five aspects of the group's activities: 1) involvement with elder culture specialists and their projects, 2) development of a mixed traditional/modern sound, 3) construction of hybrid aesthetics, 4) frequent public street performances, and 5) participatory practices. Bullenrap has become a powerful local music practice primarily due to how a clear social

intent is followed through carefully oriented social and expressive practices that respond to previously identified social problems.

Work with Local Elder Culture Specialists

From the beginning, AFM intended to address issues of intergenerational tension through the revival of practices associated with local traditional culture. Its members are young people raised during the occupation, and they were not very familiar with traditional culture; the impositions of the paramilitary had weakened local traditional expressive practices during their childhoods. These young leaders, though, personally approached the members of the Elderly Adults Association, as well as those of several other elder cultural leaders individually, to interview them about *los tiempos de antes* ("the past times") and to express their interest in learning about traditional practices. AFM approached and worked with local folklore master Chabelo, local *décimas*[27] singer Reinaldo, Reinaldo's brother and medicinal plants lore master Gregorio, renowned *rezandera* ("praying woman") Francisca, traditional farmer Pechiche, and Jacinta, one of the few remaining local *parteras* ("midwives"), among other relevant local characters.

AFM built a strong alliance with Chabelo and her husband Nico, visiting their house every day to hang out and listen to Chabelo's stories about old-time music, dance parties, games, funerary wakes, healing with herbs and prayers, supernatural phenomena, and other stories about local lore. Nico was always there, with a quieter personality than his wife, complementing her stories with knowledge of his own and telling his own

[27] *Décimas* are a form of classic Spanish poetry, highly popular as diverse sung forms throughout Latin America. Its structure consists of ten octosyllabic verses with the following rhyme structure: ABBAACCDDC.

stories.[28] Slowly, Chabelo's house became the headquarters of AFM for approximately a year. In their daily afternoon visits, the members of AFM would ritually head to the kitchen, located in the large backyard of the house, to greet Chabelo and sit down to talk about the events of the day. Then, she would serve everyone a cup of coffee, which was always either already prepared or under preparation in that house. Later, AFM members would start practicing drumming techniques, their repertoire, or work on new songs. These rehearsals lasted for several hours, until sunset. At times Chabelo would jump in, paying attention to what was being discussed, contributing ideas to the creative and training process of AFM's members. They would listen to her words, and they respected what she had to say. She was, undoubtedly, one of the co-leaders of the band, along with Ralam. Their union was so strong that, at one point, Ralam, JLeo, Gleidance, and Mr. Edi—four of AFM's core members—moved into to her house because of structural problems with their own house.

Ralam explained to me on several occasions that he felt the sense of traditional Liberteño culture got lost during the occupation. In his view, the upbringing of children born or raised during the occupation was already "tainted" and did not reflect the pre-conflict culture and way of life. This idea of "the good old past times" is romantic and constructed, since Ralam himself (just like the rest of other members of AFM) was raised during the occupation and was too young to remember the cultural expressions before that time. In his view, though, this generational gap was destroying local culture, and AFM's bonding with Chabelo and her family was a way of getting closer to experiencing the daily culture and practices associated with these traditions. Chabelo's and Nico's house is a

[28] His topics inlcuded traditional work in the fields, how he escaped the paramilitaries several times, and methods for various tasks: making one's own cigars, taming horses, saddling donkeys, and curing a goat hide for a drum, among others.

traditional house, as briefly explained in Chapter 3, and Ralam assured me that he wanted to spend as much time there as possible because he knew that the mastery and particular style with which Chabelo performed games, songs, dance, jokes, prayer, versing, and other local expressions was the result not only to particular performance techniques, but also of decades of living her life in a particular way. In other words, Ralam and the members of AFM were trying to learn traditional Liberteño culture, not only through the study of the music styles or specific performance practices (performance "texts"), but also by embodying it through experience, thus learning spontaneity, verbal wit, improvisation, and other skills that are rooted in the moment and in social interaction (performance "context"). An acknowledged consequence of this relationship is that Chabelo went from being a teacher and collaborator to becoming a member of AFM.

As the young members of AFM were learning from their collaboration with Chabelo, she also benefitted from her collaboration with them and made use of their collective work every time she felt like there were opportunities to conduct cultural activities in town. Many times she took the initiative to lead local activities, such as in meetings with elder musicians or in theater pieces and re-enactments during local celebrations. However, her strongest initiative, one that the rest of the AFM collective has supported, is participation in local funerary wakes. While funerary wake performance also interests the young members, Chabelo leads this activity; she is the one that bears enough social and cultural capital to perform the games that are part of this ritual. She only participates in the wakes of people that she knew or who were deemed important by the community, and she always asks the family for permission about this kind of participation days in advance (the wakes last nine nights). Once she has green light to perform, she is

always accompanied by the members of AFM, who have learned the games and who can facilitate a performance in which other community members can participate.

The Musical Interlock between Bullerengue and Hip-hop

When Ralam and the members of AFM decided to transform their hip-hop music by including what were considered "more traditional" musical elements in it—beyond simply including "local culture" as subject in their lyrics—they came up with a musical structure that worked effectively in the emerging bullenrap repertoire. When Simón, a musical producer working for the Victims Unit, gave the group the recorded track that later became the instrumental foundation for the song "Bullenrap," this track included both hip-hop samples and traditional Afro-Colombian bullerengue and gaita percussion rhythms. Simón constructed this track, creating new samples but also taking from his own musical fusion project Radio Rebelde. However, the clever arrangement of the vocal parts created by AFM members was what defined the fusion that constitutes the core musical aspect of bullenrap: using bullerengue chants as the refrain/chorus and rap flows during the strophes. AFM creatively uses this strategy in many of its compositions.

Bullenrap songs tend to start with the refrain section, which often follows the melodic contours and call-and-response structure typical of local bullerengue songs. Some of these chants are local compositions (such as "Bullerengue mamá" by Chabelo), others are traditional (such as "Camisola," a famous regional bullerengue song), and others are written by AFM in bullerengue or porro style (such as "El negro cimarrón"). In the traditional performance of these Afro-Colombian music styles, the chants are divided into a call/solo part and a response/choir part. While this structure is maintained in some bullenrap songs (such as in "Fritanga"), in others both parts are sung together in choral

form. These vocal parts build the refrain section of a bullenrap song, which is repeated every one or two strophes. Their songs do not have many instrumental segments and tend to be lyric-centered. The verses, which tend to be sung in hip-hop style, usually follow the chorus. Each verse is composed of four *compases*, which is the name that the members of AFM use to refer to rhymes that fit within a count of four beats. Depending on the song, one rapper or more will sing four or eight compases, leading again to the chorus. The songs often consist of four or more verses and are always punctuated by the chorus. The instrumental foundation is laid by a variation of the bullerengue rhythm played with the traditional drums. I call it a variation because, while in the traditional bullerengue style (which drum-master Emilsen Pacheco and I and taught them) only two drums are used (alegre and llamador drums), they also include the tambora, which is a two-headed low drum (like a bass drum). The tambora is not usually used for bullerengue but for other traditional music styles, such as gaita music, or folkloric dance styles like *mapalé* and *puya*.

This sound structure, containing the diverse elements that compose bullenrap, was built with awareness of what role each musical aspect was meant to play in a larger mechanism. For example, bullerengue was chosen for the refrain section for at least four reasons. First, its structure is repetitive, which gives cohesion to the refrain, the most repeated and, probably, most remembered section of a song. Second, bullerengue is already a choral practice as its performance is based on a call-and-response vocal structure in which the invariable and persistent response is sung by a chorus. By including these musical traits in the chorus section, AFM reinforces a local aesthetic through its recontextualization in a new local creative form. Third, the hope was that the inclusion of

traditional elements would foster a sense of resonance and empathy among local elders, something probably impossible with a more "pure" hip-hop group. And finally, as part of AFM's larger cultural revival project, the idea of writing the catchiest part of their songs (the refrain) in traditional styles was also meant to get children and younger generations to learn "at least a few bullerengue choruses" through this music. Similarly, rap was first introduced as the predominant musical style of the strophes because of its popularity among local youth. By repackaging their cultura lyrics into rhymes and raps, AFM worked to enable younger community members to connect more easily with the contents of their message.

I will present an example from their song "Güepajé." Its name comes from a regional expression used as exclamation of enjoyment, happiness, and cheer, often tied to Caribbean musics and dances and shouted at specific moments when the groove of the music hits a sweet spot. Other similar expressions include: *güepa*, *jé*, *epa*, *ee*, *ayombe* (from *ay hombre,* "hey, man"), among others. This song is a bullenrap that uses *güepajé* as its refrain, with a bullerengue melody and over a bullerengue beat, but with rapped verses that talk about local culture, unity among races, and bullenrap as the newest hype. Here is an excerpt of the song, from a recording at Chabelo's house on July 1st, 2016:

Ritmos tradicionales	Traditional rhythms
De nuestra tierra	From our land
Somos iguales, los bailan	We are equal, they are danced
Blancas y negras	By *whites and blacks*
Indígenas, paisas,	Indigenous people, *Paisas*,
Rolos, costeños	*Rolos, Costeños*
Todos somos lo mismo:	We are all the same:
¡Un solo pueblo!	*Just one people!*

El ritmo que la cultura Revoluciona Bullerengue rapiao Para la señora	The rhythm that culture Revolutionizes Bullerengue-rap For the lady
La tierra del fandango Y el bullerengue Bullenrap en la costa Y la rumba se prende	In the land of *fandango* And bullerengue *Bullenrap* in the coast And the party lights up
Chorus: Ajá, ajá *¡Güepajé!* (x3) *¡Güepajé, güepajé!* Ajá, ajá *¡Güepajé!* (x3) *¡Güepajé, güepajé!*	Chorus: Uhum, uhm. *Wapai-hai!* (x3) *Wapai-hai, wapai-hai!* Uhum, uhm. *Wapai-hai!* (x3) *Wapai-hai, wapai-hai!*

The second verse of the song mentions mentions *Paisas, Rolos,* and *Costeñoas,* which are colloquial names to refer to people from different Colombian regions. *Paisa* is the Colombian name for people from Antioquia and the Coffee Region (Caldas, Quindío, and Risaralda), in the Central Mountain Range. *Rolo* refers to people from the capital, Bogotá. And *Costeño* usually denotes people from the Caribbean Coast, even though Colombia also has a long coast on the Pacific Ocean.

Developing Mixed Traditional and Modern Aesthetics

As I mentioned, the idea of incorporating traditional elements in the rap music of AFM was aimed at generating empathy with the local elderly adults, addressing the needs of children and young people, and strengthening the local process of cultural revival related to the CRP. This idea of a "fusion" between traditional expressive practices and contemporary urban-influenced culture extends beyond the aural realm of music, spilling over to other aspects of AFM's practice and performance. For example, their attire during shows and video-clips suggests an inclusion of two locally distinct aesthetic styles:

"folkloric" and "urban." Two of their music videos from the early bullenrap era ("Bullenrap"[29] and "A pie pelao"[30]) feature members of the band wearing flashy baseball hats and colorful t-shirts and shorts, dancing with pronounced arm gestures suggesting hip-hop aesthetics; other members wear what are locally considered "work clothes" or a farmer's outfit—a traditional hat (*sombrero vueltiao*), jeans, and button-down shirt. Chabelo and her granddaughters appear in these videos wearing polleras (folkloric skirts) and dancing bullerengue. These images are completed by the members of the band playing their drums, making these frames an interesting portrayal of a simultaneous performance of "tradition" and "modernity."

From a compositional perspective, AFM's repertoire is also structured by this principle of simultaneity. The musical formula described in the previous section is one way of approaching the creative work of AFM, but when looking at the larger repertoire of the band, other aspects stand out. For example, the group divides its repertoire into three main styles: hip-hop, bullerengue, and bullenrap. While the first style refers to the groups' earliest repertoire, the two latter ones evolved simultaneously after group members chose to include traditional musics in their practice. AFM members wrote a series of songs that they call bullerengue, with melodies resembling traditional bullerengue and porro songs, accompanied by traditional drums. Some of these songs are "Ya no llores mama" (Don't Cry Anymore, Mother), "La muerte" (Death), "Tierra querida los Montes de María" (Dear Land, the María Mountains) and "El diablo me anda buscando" (The Devil is Looking for Me). These compositions do not include rap sections; instead, they were, in part, studies created to learn and practice traditional styles as well as to make the statement that AFM

[29] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qv5a8FuCr4o
[30] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVwePhGnRZU

could also write and perform "local folklore." In their performances, these songs are interspersed with the rest of their bullenrap repertoire, and some do have local acclaim both among adults and children. The different music styles that constitute AFM's repertoire express the intentional hybridity that its members deem be be at the heart of this music project.

A similarly interesting hybrid practice appears in AFM's street performances in Libertad: the idea of keeping a continuous beat going, on top of which they perform several songs. This practice embodies a concept parallel to "mixing," both in Caribbean sound systems (picó or "pick-up") and in hip-hop deejaying.[31] When the band performs on stages at regional or national events, they separate the songs they perform. But when they play street performances in Libertad, they put several songs together with the idea of creating a continuous stream of music that raises energy level and keeps people entertained. Traditional street bullerengue similarly includes songs with long durations (even up to thirty minutes). However, traditional performers usually do it with one song at a time, maintaining one chorus and improvising verses. AFM follows this same practice but does it with several songs, similar to performances of regional sound systems; the music does not stop, and several songs are strung together over more or less the same beat. The difference is that AFM creates a rhythmic foundation with acoustic sounds: traditional drums grooving bullerengue rhythms.

Both hip-hop and bullerengue are expressions that have emerged and survived through the adoption of content and repertoires from other Afro-diasporic traditions. They

[31] In both these sound system traditions, the idea of a deejay that keeps a continuous beat going, as well as the idea of an M.C. that sings, raps, yells, or makes announcements to the crowd on top of this main beat, is essential. The sound system is used as a technology to keep a groovy beat going non-stop.

are already hybrid to begin with. The hybridization and adoption of diverse cultural traits has been a strategy of resistance embraced by African-descendant people in the Americas and elsewhere, a topic that has been written about extensively (Bermúdez 1994). In his 2011 article about Afro-Ecuadorian music and black hybridity, Jonathan Ritter rightfully argues that

> Hybridity can be and has, in fact, been a force for cultural resistance and what Bhabha refers to as the "enunciation of cultural difference" within contemporary Afro-Ecuadorian music, but at times in counterintuitive ways. For instance, what appears (or sounds) most "traditional" may exemplify mixture and transgression,… although it may also be bound to the webs of hegemonic economic and political power. (Ritter 2011: 574)

Thus, Ritter argues that hybridity has been a strategy to strengthen cultural identity and self-determination. It has been a form of resilience to generate channels for participatory performance and integration. Ritter also acknowledges, however, that these actions and their meanings could be co-opted and entangled within larger structures that perpetuate hegemony and socioeconomic inequality, thus revealing that they are not innocent, but political (Ritter 2011).

Street and Public Performances: Music and Games

In this dissertation I have already described several instances of street performances by Chabelo and the younger members of AFM. These performances are part of a larger social aim: providing a musical experience to people in the community by using public spaces and exposing locals to their cultural revival project. While conducting fieldwork, I witnessed street performances as being one of the essential aspects of AFM's practice. At the beginning, they carried their PA system throughout town to perform their hip-hop repertoire. Later, they carried their drums throughout town to do the same, resembling the practice of *recorridos* ("parades") that older bullerengueros used to do—parading while

singing and playing drums on the streets, visiting friends' houses as well as key public spaces, such as the main square.

I have witnessed several kinds of street performances by AFM, including bullenrap shows, funerary song-game performances at wakes, street rehearsals, Halloween shows for local children, and music and dance parades at diverse local events. The first two are the most common and the ones that I believe have a more consistent impact in the community. AFM's bullenrap concerts do not follow a strict regularity or programmed schedule. The members usually account for the dates of traditional local festivities, and they sometimes prepare special performances to accompany these celebrations. Other times, they feel inspired and give almost daily performances without anchorage to a specific occasion. In January 2016, for example, they gave three to four weekly public performances for almost the whole month. Their goal was to publicly perform their new music and spread their message throughout the neighborhoods of Libertad. This drive towards making themselves visible in public has also contributed to a transformation of public space in Libertad: from an environment of silence and fear to a public space in which drums, chants, and dance (local symbols for joy and festivity) are increasingly common. The change in the aural landscape of Libertad is something that the elders have observed; while they recognize that AFM's young members still have a lot to learn about the advanced techniques and secrets of traditional drumming, they acknowledge these efforts as actions that bring those expressions back to the forefront of the community's sensibility.

Similarly, Chabelo and AFM have intentionally started to accompany many funerary wakes to play traditional games and perform necessary cultural work to "complete" the ritual framework of the events, which are a significant social practice for

strengthening communal ties and cooperation. They do not participate in all the wakes in Libertad, since there would be too many and some people adhere to a more "purely" Catholic practice that does not embrace traditional wakes. AFM usually participates in the wakes of people with whom they have had a relationship of some sort. In these wakes, aspects such as the many visitors, the altar, the prayer cycles, the separate spaces for prayer and entertainment (the living room and front of the house), and the hospitality (coffee, hot cocoa, *calentillo*) all have quickly recovered from the oppression of the paramilitary occupation. The performance of games, on the other hand, had weakened drastically. Chabelo and AFM want to encourage and revitalize this practice. They first ask the sponsors of the wake—the immediate relatives—for permission to play. In these instances, the members of AFM initiate and facilitate the activity, but other community members always join quickly, participating in games that they all know but that are rarely performed without proper facilitation. Chabelo and AFM perform that role in these ritual contexts, facilitating sessions of traditional games on the street in front of the funerary wake.

Participatory Practices

As a collective of young local leaders, AFM encourages democratic participatory practices and the empowerment of other members in adopting leadership positions. Ralam explained to me that their desire for the recognition of the youth organization by the local leadership led them to take a horizontal organizational approach within AFM, setting an example for participatory methodologies of work. One example of these participatory practices is the collective writing of and participation in the songs. The members of AFM collectively create a chorus, usually (but not always) in bullerengue style, and then several of its members start writing individual verses. Then, they collectively meet to decide which

ones to include in the performance, in what order, and the people who will sing them. Many times, the writer of the songs sings it, and sometimes Ralam writes verses for other members. However, the entire band often knows most of the lyrics, and when a member is not present to sing his/her part, someone else is usually able to cover for the missing member. This shared responsibility is a process inspired and led by Ralam.

These collective writing efforts are fundamental to the construction of a sense of connection, empathy, and empowerment among community members. Through the process of selection of the verses and lyrics, the group discusses the message wants to spread, and each song has to tell a specific, unified story. Some of their songs address local culture and how bullenrap is a new incarnation of local culture, reshaping it and making it current again. Other lyrics discuss local situations, such as the large numbers of mosquitos and techniques to get rid of them; local celebrations like Holy Week and the special foods prepared for that occasion; or situations related to farming, such as borrowing a donkey from the neighbor or quenching one's thirst with fresh corn water from a gourd. A third type of lyric concerns more abstract and philosophical issues, such as violence and peace, the experience of death, migration and the heartbreak of leaving the territory, the consequences of poverty, and the breach in the transmission of tradition. This collective songwriting and musical practice fosters a deep sense of belonging with the territory, with the community, and with peer members of AFM.

Additionally, AFM has a marked focus on working with local children, a demographic that often participates in their activities. Their street events are regularly attended by many children. They are AFM's biggest fans and follow the group everywhere. During its shows, AFM opens some spaces for children who know the songs

to go on stage and sing them. This a powerful and empowering practice because it allows children to share stage time and experience with these artists, generating confidence and encouraging them to pursue artistic expressions. AFM also conducts music training workshops with local children, teaching them to play the traditional drums.

AFM has developed all these techniques with the aim of consolidating bullenrap as a local musical and cultural practice oriented towards social integration and peaceful coexistence. During my stays in Libertad, I witnessed how these strategies kept evolving, and how the group planned diverse actions and activities to strengthen the core aspects of the project.

Photo 19. Recording the "A pie pelao" video with Afro-Música.

Capacity Building with Local Musicians: Afro-Colombian Drumming, Grant Writing, and Applied Ethnomusicology

Soon after I arrived to Libertad for my first dissertation fieldwork trip in October 2015, I started collaborating with AFM. As it became obvious that this collective of young people was going to become an important part of my research about music and social transformation in post-conflict scenarios, I decided to follow them closely. Every day, I

visited them at Ralam's or Chabelo's house while they were discussing AFM activities, practicing, planning cultural events with the Victims Unit, or just hanging out. They allowed me to accompany them nearly everywhere, and they let me ask all the questions I wanted, for which I am grateful. In these situations, I played the role of a classic ethnographer. But on other occasions we actively collaborated in the development of activities, some of which were oriented towards my research, while others were meant to advance AFM's work. Such situations usually occurred because they, or someone else on their behalf, requested my support and cooperation with their project. In other words, I remained intentionally passive and did not propose anything to them as I waited to learn from local leaders if and how I should cooperate with them on their projects and initiatives. I did tell them, however, that they could approach me if they thought there was something I could help with.

I embraced this approach for several reasons. First, this dissertation examines social capital as constructed and perpetuated through music and other cultural practices while considering its role in peacebuilding. Collaboration between several parties from diverse backgrounds, representing distinct demographics and involving identity politics, is an important aspect directly related to both the issue of social capital and the collective reparation plan. Thus, at first I worried that my participation in their projects could potentially complicate the data related to grassroots agency and local capacities for developing transformative music projects. As I explain later in this chapter, however, the fact that AFM requested my collaboration in their project did not undermine my ability to discern whether social transformation was inspired by my participation; instead, events confirmed the idea that the young leaders of AFM are empowered individuals who know

how to identify social assets they can use to advance their goals. These young leaders do not just identify such assets, they pursue them. Therefore, collaborating with local musicians under such circumstances served to confirm my hypotheses rather than "tainting" or "obscuring" my data. Second, this was the first time I was living in the community. I have a background in the study of applied ethnomusicology as well as in working on consensual participatory projects that engage local musicians in their logics and aesthetics and are designed to empower them and strengthen their practices. Previously, though, I had carried out such projects either on my own initiative or as part of larger projects on which I was hired to work. Therefore, this seemed like a perfect opportunity for me to explore, through practice, issues about the "authority" of the ethnographer because, in this case, people decided whether and how they could use me to accomplish their goals.

When given the opportunity to collaborate with local musicians, I tried my best to refrain from paternalistic approaches and always treated my community co-workers as peers and teachers, making decisions collectively when necessary, but always acknowledging their leadership and executive power within the AFM collective. Sometimes, however, given the roles they requested of me—such as my temporary leadership as music instructor—I also had to perform in ways that involved making suggestions and orienting some actions. Below I will discuss four main areas in which I collaborated with AFM and other local musicians during my dissertation fieldwork that may have had an impact in the development of bullenrap. First, the leaders of AFM asked me to teach them to play local rhythms on the traditional drums, and I complied. Second, the leaders of AFM and the Victims Unit asked me to "prepare" the group for a showcase

performance for promoters at an important cultural market in Cartagena, which I did. Third, some collaborators from Bogotá and I, in agreement with local leaders, took the initiative of writing two grant proposals for the Ministry of Culture, which we won and implemented. And finally, AFM members sometimes accompanied me on my fieldwork visits to elder culture specialists; later they began visiting elders themselves, using their own media strategies, a practice that evolved into a form of their own local ethnography.

Photo 20. Afro-Música, Chabelo, and me visiting elder bullerengue singer Reina Quiñónez, 93, from the nearby town of Pajonal. Gleidance is doing the ethnographic record of the event using my audio recorder and his own tablet.

Afro-Colombian Drumming Workshops and Initiation

One of the strongest collaborations between AFM and myself was the process of initiation and training in traditional Caribbean Afro-Colombian drumming (bullerengue rhythms, specifically), a musical style I had research and practiced professionally for more than a decade. In 2004, I founded La Rueda, a bullerengue group based in Bogotá, which has participated many times at national bullerengue festivals in the towns of Puerto Escondido, Necoclí, and Marialabaja, and has even won a few awards. La Rueda has

conducted several collaborative projects with traditional bullerengue performers, with whom we established strong friendships over time. One such relationship started in 2005 with renowned bullerengue master Emilsen Pacheco from San Juan de Urabá, who became my drum teacher. As I mentioned, it was only because AFM asked for my assistance in teaching them traditional drumming techniques that I accepted such responsibility. Ralam and other members were already waiting for the Victims Unit to send a traditional music teacher to Libertad, but that project (which is included in the CRP) has yet to be implemented at the time of writing. AFM members had already identified the need to learn traditional drumming skills to strengthen their project, and they already knew what they were going to do with the skills. At that moment, however, no one else in the community had the capacity to conduct these workshops. The only local drummer available then was elder Miguel Sarmiento (age 89), whose health prevented him from taking on this demanding challenge. In a way, my participation as instructor happened at the right time.

During my fieldtrip to Libertad in 2015, I facilitated eight Afro-Colombian traditional drumming workshops and lessons and, thus far, have conducted at least twenty-five such events. Even though I had brought my own alegre drum from Bogotá, we needed more instruments to conduct the lessons. With some difficulties, we managed to get the Impulse Committee to lend us instruments for the workshops. At that time, AFM's relationship with the Impulse Committee was tense; the committee only agreed to our request if I personally checked out the instruments, as they said my presence inspired confidence and "seriousness" (*seriedad*). This attitude had changed drastically by the end of the first series of workshops. It was then that the leadership acknowledged that AFM

was a legitimate local music collective and granted them use of the communal drums, which they managed even after I left town.

My fieldwork in Libertad involved three longer stays—five to eight weeks each—plus several additional shorter trips of one week or less. Throughout this time, I conducted traditional percussion workshops with the members of AFM and other community members. During my first, longer trip, from five to fourteen members of the band participated in the workshops. Immediately, it became clear to me that these young people did not have previous experience with this kind of instrument or with the music traditionally played on it. I had to begin a drumming initiation process from ground zero, teaching them basic stick techniques (for the tambora), hand-drumming techniques (for the alegre and llamador drums), as well as maraca shaker techniques. It took several meetings for them to begin embodying the basic accents of bullerengue and gaita musics, interpreted by the llamador drum and accentuated by the beginning of the maraca phrase, on the second and fourth quarter notes of a 2/2 bar. At the beginning, they mistook this upbeat accent for the downbeat, sparking confusion when listening to the polyrhythmic percussion cycle. This confusion may have stemmed from the rooted downbeat bass-drum sensation characteristic of reguetón, champeta, and other Caribbean popular music styles, with which these young musicians were most familiar.

Fig. 3. Transcription of bullerengue percussion patterns; supporting parts with the highest and lowest pitches in the bullerengue main groove.

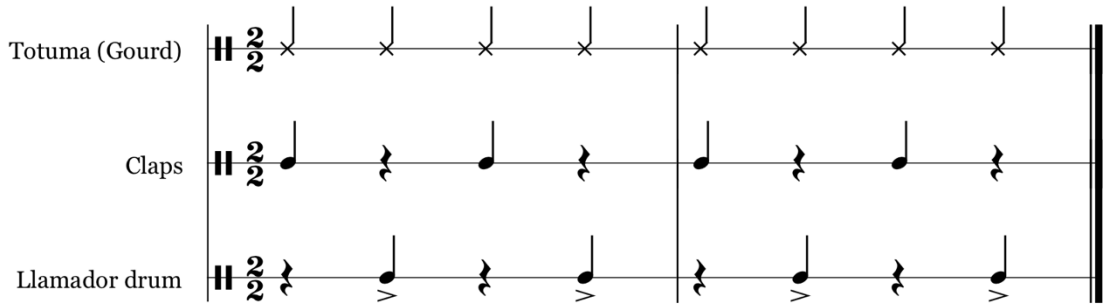
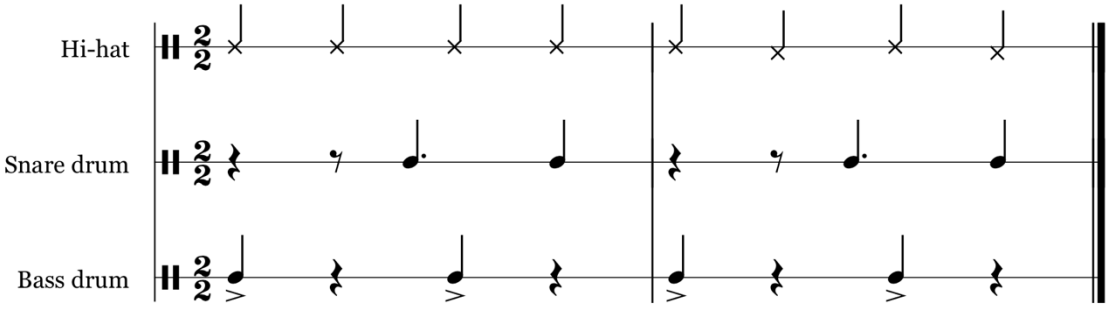


Fig. 4. Transcription of the steady drum-set pattern in the reguetón groove.



The highest and lowest drum-set parts in the reguetón groove fulfill functions analogous to the highest and lowest supporting percussion in the bullerengue rhythm, holding the subdivision with the highest-pitched instrument while marking the main and invariable accents of the groove of the lowest-pitched instrument. However, the relationship between the rhythmic articulation of the two examples is "inverted," or displaced by half a beat (a quarter note), thus making the main accent in reguetón the downbeat and the main accent in bullerengue, the upbeat. While the claps reinforce the downbeat in bullerengue, the snare drum plays the last two beats of the pattern known as "Caribbean clave," painting the main rhythmic structure around which the reguetón melodies move. While bullerengue is also structured around a similar rhythmic timeline,

this one is developed and expressed on the alegre drum patterns and phrases, not transcribed here.

Traditional music records are frequently played in local taverns during Christmas and Carnival seasons (December, November 11, and the weekend before Ash Wednesday), so the music is not completely foreign to young people's listening experience. But they do not listen to it actively; it is the music of old people. It was during December 2015 that my first longer trip came to an end. I returned to Bogotá, leaving AFM with their newly-acquired basic bullerengue drumming knowledge, lots of motivation, and the perfect season for practice. In January 2016, they started sending me pictures of their "neighborhood performances" (*presentaciones en los barrios*), which they conducted several times a week for the entire community. Their aim was to expose everyone to their music, as well as to get to know and perform with other community members fond of traditional drum-and-chant musical practices. In these photos, I saw what I later confirmed during my visit in March and April 2016: AFM has stopped using recorded samples for instrumental background and now accompanied their songs with the traditional bullerengue drums.

Additionally, over the course of those few short months, they started an intense music education process focused on their own practice and on teaching local children whate they had learned thus far. For several months, AFM held free daily music lessons at Ralam's house, open to anyone in the community. Mostly children attended, sometimes more than thirty in a single day. This space was important because many of the approximately eighty children who participated in AFM's school had their first musical experiences there, and some maintained their relations with the project in one way or

another. These lessons enabled young kids to experience the sounds and musics of local drums, an experience that the members of AFM themselves did not have while growing up. They understood this activity as replicating the acquired knowledge that would facilitate and sustain the revival process.

These complementary activities—neighborhood performances and teaching music to local children—became possible because members of AFM played their own bullerengue beats, strengthening their message and resonating with several age groups in the community. Thus, even though I facilitated workshops that enabled important developments in the AFM project, the band's members initiated and sponsored this action with a clear intent of their role as part of the larger scheme of things.

The Production of Shows: The Caribbean Cultural Market in Cartagena

Victims Unit officials as well as AFM's leaders requested that I work with them to "prepare" the band for their participation in the 2015 Caribbean Cultural Market (CCM), held November 27-29 in the Caribbean city of Cartagena de Indias. This event is a pioneer cultural market and fair in Colombia, one that has inspired similar initiatives in other parts of the country. It has created new channels to improve and enlarge the production and circulation of Colombian music and dance groups nationally and internationally. Through a system similar to Womex (World Music Expo), with music performances catered to music executives and promoters, fair stands, and business meetings between "suppliers" and "programmers," this yearly event positioned itself as an important avenue for music ensembles to reach potential business partners and find opportunities for work. Thanks to the help of Isaías Guerrero—a Colombian graduate student at the University of Notre Dame who was doing research in Libertad and Macayepo (a nearby community)—who

took care of the application paperwork, AFM was accepted in the CCM.[32] This situation was extraordinary, especially because AFM had been granted the opportunity to present a business pitch and perform in a "showcase" concert, named for the official performances in the frame of the event, an opportunity given only to bands that organizers considered to have the potential for commercial success. AFM was not scheduled on the big stages, but their showcase was indicative of their potential, at least per the event's curator.

We met ten times to work on preparations for Cartagena, including eight guided rehearsals and two "elevator-pitch" workshops. For the rehearsals, I acted as the artistic director of the band, designing the stage set-up according to their chosen aesthetic, collectively curating the show's set-list, and working on simple arrangements to make each song sound distinct. We also worked on performance techniques, such as microphone use, stage distribution (stage-plot design), and pitch. A description of the first of those rehearsals opened this chapter. The other seven occurred at the school during the span of almost three weeks. For each practice, we carried all the drums and a two-cabin PA system with one microphone (at the time, AFM still used recorded instrumentals as foundation for its hip-hop repertoire). Back then, in November 2015, the drumming workshops had just started. Only two songs included traditional drums, which Ralam wanted to include as a sign of the emergent process of musical revival. In these songs, Gleidance played the *llamador* drum and I played the *alegre* drum.

During the rehearsals one issue became particular relevant: how to include Chabelo as a representation of bullerengue on stage. At the time, the elder *cantaora* was already

[32] Isaías Guerrero was an early collaborator of AFM, producing videoclips for some of their first songs, which can still be seen online: "Un pueblo que sueña" ("A town that dreams," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eO1ukgCPNyU) and "Memoria" ("Memory," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5xAFgKSRCs).

part of the group, but she was not yet integrated into some of the musical aspects of AFM. Most of the nineteen members selected for this trip planned to wear urban/hip-hop style clothes, but Chabelo, her daughter Maritza, and her granddaughter were going to wear traditional bullerengue outfits. They clustered together in a little mini-choir space on stage, where they also danced bullerengue. Simón, the Victims Unit musical producer, was going to join us at the venue with his DJ set. We set the stage-plot so that on the right side was the DJ station and, on the left side, a traditional drums station, representing the idea of sharing and equality between hip-hop and bullerengue. The show started with the more straight-forward hip-hop songs and, as it progressed, other songs with more traditional musical features were introduced. The first of these songs was "Bullenrap." After, we introduced the drums with "Fritanga" ("Fried food"), a *bullenrap* that speaks about local gastronomy. In this song Gleidance and I played the drums on top of a prepared beat. Finally, we played AFM's version of "Camisola," a well-known traditional bullerengue, in which we also played drums over a prepared beat. During some sections of specific songs, everyone on stage started dancing bullerengue. The showcase was successful and AFM made important contacts from that experience.

Many situations that occurred during this trip led me to reflect on how a community-music project oriented towards social rehabilitation ends up adjusting its dynamics to meet the needs of the culture industries, thus molding its activities and planning, which emerged from powerful grassroots initiatives, to the calls of contemporary capitalism. The divergent ideas about the role of AFM in the collective reparation of the Libertad community—as understood differently by Victims Unit officials and the leaders

of AFM—is a matter I explore more in depth in theChapter Five, where I expand on some of our experiences at Cartagena's 2015 CCM.

Fundraising through Grants and Project Implementation

At the time of this writing, I have participated in the preparation of three grant proposals to implement projects in Libertad related to music and traditional cultural practices. Two of those three proposals were accepted for funding, and I also worked in their implementation (both were funded by the Ministry of Culture of Colombia). The third proposal did not receive funding but was the most collaborative and participatory one. I will now describe these three processes.

The Ministry of Culture of Colombia issues a yearly grants portfolio, called the Programa Nacional de Estímulos (National Stimuli Program), which funds all kinds of cultural activities related to the ministry's policies and programs in areas such as the arts (musical, visual, theater, dance, literature), film, libraries, heritage, national archives, communications (documentary, radio, public TV), cultural rights, cultural entrepreneurship, Spanish and native languages, and sociocultural diversity. I checked the 2016 portfolio for grants to apply to with AFM. One program that seemed pertinent was the Afro-Colombian Decade Award.[33] This award aimed at benefitting local Afro-Colombian cultural leaders in areas such as dance, crafts, communal organization, storytelling, traditional medicine, and ancestral rituals. Because she is a highly recognized local leader, I asked Chabelo if she was interested in participating in the "ancestral rituals" category; after all, funerary wakes in Libertad have been an important aspect of the CRP

[33] This program was created in commemoration of the passing of Law 70/1997, also known as "Law of Afro-Colombian Communities," which legitimizes the existence and contributions of—and long overdue need for historical reparation to—black communities in Colombia.

program after the occupation. She said yes, but was further convinced after I told her there was an eight thousand dollars monetary award.

The materials for the application included her curriculum vitae as well as documented proof of her local prestige and recognition. Chabelo and I met for two recorded conversations (in Spring 2016), during which we developed her CV from scratch. She asked that her artist and cultural worker friend, Camilo Conde, a person she deeply trusted, also participate in the project. I had met Camilo during one of his visits to Libertad. When Chabelo and I contacted him, he immediately agreed to participate. Camilo came all the way from Bogotá to Libertad, and together we conducted several interviews with local leaders who testified to the importance of Chabelo's cultural work. I provided Camilo with some of my video material of Chabelo performing at a funerary wake, and he edited a short video with the interviews and her performances. I compiled the written materials for the application, including the CV and several letters from local organizations demonstrating support for her.

Around July 2016, we received notice that Chabelo had won the Afro-Colombian Decade Award in the ancestral rituals category. The great news was accompanied by a great responsibility, as Camilo and I feared that the presence of an unusually large amount of money could potentially spark social tension within the community. Additionally, we agreed with Chabelo that we would lay out a budget plan with her, to assist her with managing the money she had just received. Our suggestions were never more than that, suggestions, and Chabelo and one of her daughters were the only ones that had access to the bank account with the funds. These funds helped Chabelo secure agricultural work to produce enough food for the household for several months, to buy a motorcycle for one of

her sons, and to purchase a professional Canon digital camera and a desktop computer for AFM. She also paid many debts, unexpected medical expenses for her husband Nico, and travelled to Bogotá, accompanied by Ralam and her daughter, to attend the awards ceremony of the Ministry of Culture.

With the NGO Sonidos Enraizados ("Rooted Sounds"), we designed a proposal for the National Artistic Internship program, also part of the larger National Stimuli Program. This proposal, supported by the local Afro-Colombian Consejo Comunitario, was designed to secure funding for a series of workshops with traditional bullerengue master Emilsen Pacheco (Sonidos Enraizados' touring/recording artist and close friend) in three localities of the Caribbean region where he had noticed the weakening of bullerengue practices. One of these localities was Libertad, where Emilsen had been during the 2014 festival. The other two towns were Montería and Isla Grande. The proposal was funded, and we conducted two one-week-long series of daily workshops in each of these three localities. In Libertad, the workshops (conducted in September and November 2016) were aimed at two groups: elementary school and junior-high/high-school children. Members of the AFM collective also benefitted from the workshops, through working as assistants and senior students of Pacheco. Approximately sixty children from the community participated, learning bullerengue drumming, dancing, and singing.

The third proposal in which I participated (July 2016) was motivated by Lani Pickard, a US-American social worker working for regional NGO Sembrando Paz (Sowing Peace). She recommended that AFM applied to the Projects Bank grant program (from the Victims Unit), which specifically focuses on local peacebuilding processes. She also suggested that I help them with the proposal. This proposal was written collectively with

AFM and the local Afro-Colombian Consejo Comunitario during several meetings I facilitated. The project's goal was defined as the sensitization of local population to the current post-conflict national reality ("post-agreement") through the construction of a local collective memory center that would hold information about local culture and history, as well as the territory, its key leaders, and information related to the local process of social organization. During the proposal design phase, I suggested to the Consejo Comunitario that the project be developed with both the Juvenile Peace Fostering Organization of Libertad (JPFO—a local youth organization) and AFM. They agreed and we started working with all stakeholders to create a collective proposal.

Originally, I intended to create common-ground between three local organizations that, through their prior activities, had demonstrated interest in local cultural projects. An additional objective was to strengthen the role of youth organizations as cultural leaders by creating opportunities for them to manage and lead local projects. During the first meetings, though, several members of JPFO told me that they did not want to work with AFM because they felt that their work was not compatible. AFM had recently split from JPFO, becoming strong and independent, and wanted to focus on cultural work. Meanwhile, JPFO was interested in maintaining a more diverse range of activities, including the revival of traditional agricultural practices, fostering of athletics, and environmental projects. Their separation was still recent, and the personal relationships between the members were not the best at the time; several AFM members had officially retired from JPFO and others had quit AFM to remain exclusively as members of JPFO. At the time of writing, these relationships are strong again (both organizations cooperate often), but in that moment they made clear how tension among the leadership can trump

productive initiatives. The members of JPFO decided they did not want to participate in the proposal, preventing the inclusion of an important aspect of the project: traditional agricultural practices and environmental awareness. Despite this, AFM, the Consejo Comunitario, and myself continued meeting and designing a proposal. The proposal was not funded, though, and my assessment is that was due in part to the lack of involvement of JPFO in the proposal, as their participation complemented the project perfectly.

Local Ethnographic Initiatives

After my arrival to Libertad in October 2015, I became aware of AFM's intent of getting involved with local elders to listen to their stories, ask them questions about "traditional culture," and then use the knowledge gathered from these interactions towards specific goals such as songwriting or the design of cultural events. This is one of the strongest aspects I found in AFM's work: the acknowledgment of intergenerational tension and the practice of reaching out to elders to construct solutions by recognizing each other and acknowledging "ancestral" values and cultural practices. I documented this practice in my fieldnotes; I saw it, for example, during the meetings of the local Elders Association. The accompaniment and participation of AFM in many of my own ethnographic activities—such as travelling to neighboring towns to interview and play music with bullerengue and gaita performers—gave them new ideas to improve their own strategies and techniques for investigating and documenting local culture.

Part of my fieldwork activities included interviewing older traditional musicians, not only from Libertad, but also from neighbor localities. An accepted idea is that these musicians travelled a lot in the past as guests, as hired musicians for local celebrations, or to visit fellow musicians and party with them. Chabelo was the first local performer to

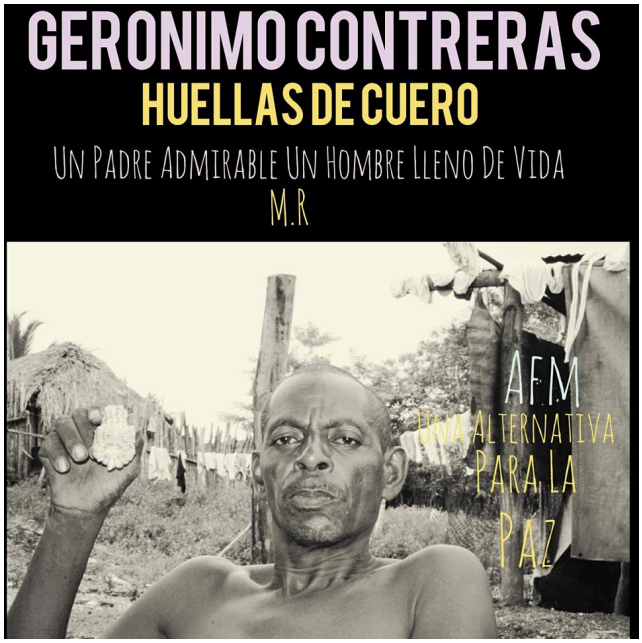
encourage me, and she accompanied me to meet people she knew outside of town. Together we visited bullerengue drummer and dancer Gabriel Ruiz, in Pisisí. We visited, interviewed, and played music with regional masters, such as Reina Quiñónez from Pajonal (93 years old at the time) and Félix Santiago Chiquillo (90 years old) from Palo Alto. For some of these young people, these were their first experiences meeting with older regional (not Liberteño) masters who, to their eyes, represented a way of life that they wanted to "recover" (*recuperar*) in Libertad. Chabelo's presence during these experiences was crucial. Her incredible charisma made possible an easy rapport with the elders, and some of them already knew her.

Every time I returned to Libertad, the members of AFM would tell me that they had met other elders, somewhere in the rural areas of Libertad, who knew lots of local lore, that they listened to their stories and were inspired by these experiences. Later, they started documenting some of these encounters and posting reports on social networks (Facebook, especially). First, they posted pictures of activities they were conducting in town: neighborhood performances, workshops, travels. Later, they started what Ralam explained to me as the newest AFM strategy—Huellas de Cuero ("Hide Trails"), referring to the trails left by a generation of people raised during times when the sound of drums and their hide drumheads were common in the imagined "daily life" of the community. Their previous strategy, A Pie Pelao ("Barefoot"), focused on moving around with the drums to perform in neighborhoods (or sometimes other towns), while sharing and jamming with masters of local lore and music. Huellas de Cuero, on the other hand, was a visual/social-media oriented initiative, centered on making visible the work and contributions to the

communituy of local leaders through the publication of carefully crafted meme-like pictures on social media, as Ralam explained in November 2016.

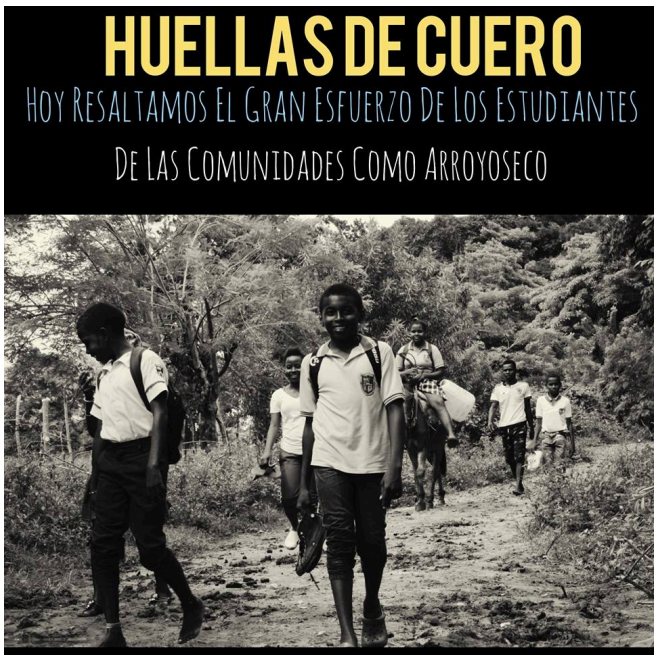
This strategy remains in place, and Ralam still posts these images on AFM's Facebook site. Here is an example of one of those images, posted on Facebook in November 2016:

Fig. 5. An image on Facebook from AFM's "Huellas de Cuero" initiative.



The person in the image is the father of Mr. Edins, one of the AFM percussionists at the time. The text translates as, "Gerónimo Contreras. Hide Trails. An admirable father and a man full of life. M.R. AFM: An alternative for peace." These memes were designed to generate awareness about the work of local leaders as well as to highlight the positive values of traditional local culture and values and the effort of its community members, as the next meme displays.

Fig. 6. Another image from "Huellas de Cuero."



The legend reads, "Hide Trails. Today, we highlight the great effort of students from communities, such as Arroyoseco." Arroyoseco is a small village, some thirty minutes by foot from Libertad. Children in Arroyoseco have to walk from ninety minutes to two hours every day to attend school in Libertad. This image is a homage to and acknowledgment of the efforts made by these young people to educate themselves and "come forward" (*salir adelante*), a local expression that means "to overcome poverty." This visual online strategy is ongoing, and AFM embraces it as one of their established courses of action when documenting the contributions of local cultural leaders to the reconstruction of social fabric in Libertad. I believe that the sophistication in the techniques utilized to approach local and regional elder culture specialists and elicit information from them is partially an influence of my own ethnographic work, which inspired many activities that they witnessed and conducted daily (interviews, taking notes, recording audio of events, photography, guiding questions in conversations, questioning assumptions, computer writing, among others).

However, the carefully crafted portrayal of community members, the concise but powerful messages, and the online distribution strategies have to be fully credited to them.

Afro-Música en Los Montes de María: Bullenrap and Tradition

The musical work of AFM and Chabelo has been fundamental to the creation of new spaces that facilitate the participation of community members in music practices that are starting to be considered local and representative of Libertad by relevant sectors of the local society. Bullenrap is a musical practice involving actions that have effects on interpersonal relationships, fostering a peaceful and constructive coexistence and a general betterment of social interactions among people who participate in, support, or follow the AFM project. Therefore, bullenrap is a local construction that is not only meant to become a new, successful, and appealing music genre, but also a means to facilitate peacebuilding (*construcción de paz*), the rehabilitation of the social fabric (*tejido social*), and a sense of belonging in the territory (*territorio*). Through their activities, local musicians have addressed fundamental social needs that had been previously identified during the diagnosis phase of the Collective Reparation Plan design process, such as the betterment of intergenerational relations, especially between teenagers/young-adults and the elderly; the rehabilitation of local cultural practices, especially traditional music, dance, and funerary-wake games; and the development of music training processes with local children and young people to foster the music potential of Libertad's youth.

The members of AFM managed to construct this new musical expression by fusing elements from hip-hop and local bullerengue and, in this way, created an expressive mechanism that enabled the rebuilding of an affective bridge between elderly adults and young people. People from diverse age groups like bullenrap, and they like it for several

reasons. Many of the local people from diverse age groups whom I surveyed said that they considered AFM a positive project, that it had been decades since drum music had been an active practice in town, and that they thought that people involved in the AFM project "are not thinking about bad stuff" (*no están pensando en lo malo*) but are instead concentrating on making music and staying away from trouble. This idea of AFM as a constructive social force was reinforced when the group embraced a more involved learning and creative process with Afro-Colombian traditional musics, such as gaita and bullerengue.

In Chapter Three, I discussed the emergence of AFM as a local organization and the roles of Ralam and Chabelo in getting the dominant local leadership to acknowledge their communal work, process, and contribution. This transformation in others' attitudes towards their work was certainly influenced by AFM's commitment to the revival of local cultural traditions. If they had remained a mostly hip-hop band, their affective power in other sectors of the local society would probably have been weaker. While imaginaries about hip-hop are closely associated with urban gang violence, and with the local history of paramilitary violence, local cultural traditions are seen as part of the lost "old times" (*los tiempos de antes*); these traditions are considered positive and normative—the way things should be—and, therefore, are both desired and accepted.

Bullenrap also emerged as an expressive practice that explicitly addresses local social issues through song lyrics. Conscious of the relevance of a clear and constructive message, the members of AFM craft their songs to provide a positive message full of hope for a brighter future. Additionally, these young songwriters make sure that their lyrics address local topics, terms, words, expressions, characteristic or funny situations, cultural recovery, and homage to local elders, among other issues, in order to facilitate resonance

between them and their listeners. However, one of the main reasons why the lyrics and message stick with listeners is because they are rhymed with precision and sung with groovy and syncopated rhythms that resonate and enhance the already grooving bullerengue percussion section.

Bullenrap is a mix of creative communal participation practices oriented towards social integration, with creation and training processes based on the hybridization of hip-hop and local musical traditions, such as bullerengue. Its practitioners have developed a message that discusses the reconstruction of the local community and the creation of local spaces for peacebuilding through traditional expressive practices such as drumming, singing, and dancing. This chapter has shown how bullenrap challenges established notions of "traditional culture," creating a communal work strategy that addresses intergenerational tension through music and cultural revival, a process in which I participated during concrete situations. I am grateful for the opportunity of contributing to this socially constructive process through the activities that were requested of me, fulfilling specific functions in the emergence of this local community music project.

Applied Social Research Practices

In this chapter I have portrayed bullenrap and other practices of the AFM collective not only as the core subject of this dissertation, but also as a local social process in which I had a limited and clearly marked participation during specific events. I consider this participation an integral part of my research process. The same I-researcher who is studying bullenrap as an ethnographer is also the I-collaborator who initiated the members of AFM in traditional drumming practices and helped to produce their 2015 CCM performance. From my perspective as subject-scholar, bullenrap represents the concretion

of both the AFM project as a principal research subject of this dissertation and as the implementation of collaborative and transformative research practices that aim at strengthening social processes from a local-needs perspective.

While this dissertation is not an applied research project per se, I approached certain parts of it with theories and methodologies from applied ethnomusicology. Beyond a reflexive account that acknowledges my potential contributions to communal music projects in Libertad, I will briefly discuss the impact, initiative, and agenda of the applied activities discussed above. Current applied social scholars tend to be critical of how processes of knowledge production are carried out in what they consider to be purely academic research contexts (understanding "purely academic" as scholarly practices conducted exclusively in university settings). Brown and Strega, for example, claim that purely academic social science "obscures important questions about how the development of knowledge is socially constructed and controlled, how knowledge is used, and whose interests knowledge serves" (Brown and Strega 2005: 6). Reflexive approaches to ethnography are further taken to account not only for the role of the ethnographer in the research process, but also for his/her influence in larger frameworks of social life. Thus, general questions that applied researchers tend to ask include: what is the ethical purpose of a research project? Will it produce knowledge that can, in some way, contribute to social transformation? Does it, to any extent, challenge the inherently asymmetrical relationships of the ethnographic practice? Does it contribute to the construction of "subjugated knowledges" (Aparicio and Blaser 2006)? Where is the knowledge produced? By whom? For whom?

My fieldwork embraced some applied practices, many of which advanced my research agenda and others that were intended more to advance the agendas of local stakeholders. In the case of the music and percussion workshops, AFM's agency, intent, and initiative were clear: they already knew what they wanted, and I showed up at the right time to fulfill their request. The knowledge produced through this activity was intended to improve the musical capacities of the members of AFM so they could further their cultural revival project. Usually, AFM requested the lessons from me, and we would schedule time and place. We worked together to arrange logistics (picking up the drums, letting people know, etc.), but during the lessons I made most of the decisions, especially regarding the technical aspects of music making and traditional drumming. However, we also discussed what material they thought would be of most practical value for their project. Unsurprisingly, they chose to start with bullerengue and gaita musics. As a consequence of this process, these young musicians stopped their previous practice of singing accompanied by recorded tracks and now play their own beats.

My participation as artistic director/tour manager for the 2015 Caribbean Cultural Market (CCM) worked in a similar fashion. The purpose was to enhance the musical and performance capacities of AFM in a formal concert setting. I began the drum workshops a little bit before working with AFM towards the CCM. In part, the Victims Unit asked me to accompany AFM to Cartagena because I was already working with the group and also because they agreed to it. For the Victims Unit, this initiative was framed as part of what they call the "satisfaction" measure in collective reparation program; this measure plays a specific role in CRPs nationally to mitigate collective pain and re-dignify the victims. Nonetheless, community members and I put together the showcase concert that we

presented in Cartagena. The outcome of this action had less to do with the expected result of participation in cultural markets—booking shows, arranging tours, closing recording or promotion deals, and so on—and more to do with networking with regional cultural workers. Partially because of this contact with Corporación Cabildo (the NGO that organizes the CCM), Ralam is currently working in a Ministry of Culture project called Expedición Sensorial por los Montes de María (Sensorial Expedition through the María Mountains), operated by Corporación Cabildo in Libertad and other regional localities. Another effect was the training and experience in stage performance and management in a more "professional" setting.

Each of the grant programs in which I participated were different. For example, the national Afro-Colombian Decade Award that Chabelo won started as an initiative conceived by NGO Sembrando Paz's ("Sowing Peace") US-American social worker Lani Pickard and myself. When the Ministry of Culture's funding announcement came out, both of us looked through it, simultaneously but unaware of each other's actions, to see if there were grants for which Libertad community members could apply. Beyond that initial idea, Lani did not work through the process, but Chabelo, Camilo Conde, and I did: we put the proposal together, conducted several meetings to reconstruct Chabelo's CV, and interviewed several leaders for a video-clip that demonstrated her relevance as local cultural leader. Our goal, if we won the award, was to provide additional funding for Chabelo and the processes in which she was a leader and participant.

The bullerengue workshops with Rooted Sounds and Emilsen Pacheco were a different process because this initiative emerged from within this organization as means to support regional bullerengue master Emilsen Pacheco, enlarge his student base along

specific localities on the Caribbean region, and help with the construction of his bullerengue school in San Juan de Urabá, a town on the western Colombian Caribbean Coast. We articulated this project with Libertad's cultural revival processes for two reasons: first, because Pacheco had acknowledged the relevance of the local bullerengue tradition; and second, to provide a different type of musical training to young Liberteño people from what I had provided them, since this time they were taking lessons from an actual traditional Afro-Colombian master drummer. While this process was not fully centered in Libertad, as two other Caribbean localities also participated (Montería and Isla Grande), many local children and young people, including members of AFM, benefitted from this project.

The third grant proposal we worked on was from the Victims Unit Projects Bank program. This initiative was, again, suggested by Lani Pickard from Sembrando Paz. This time, the intent of the proposal was discussed collectively between the members of the JPFO, the Consejo Comunitario, AFM, and myself, although only the last three remained until the submission. We agreed that the purpose of the project was to initiate the creation of a communal memory center for Libertad. Throughout the several meetings we conducted to develop this proposal, I took notes and systematized the elicited information.Then, following the notes, I organized suggestions, as well as critiques of these suggestions, to prove their strength in the discussion. While, unfortunately, the proposal did not received funding, the process of writing it made the AFM and the Consejo Comunitario work together in a way they had not before. Since this collaboration, the Consejo Comunitario and AFM have conducted many other activities together.

I do not consider my influence on AFM's local ethnographic practices as an applied activity per se, although it may have built some capacity among its members. Thus, my participation aimed at making AFM stronger, but always with acute awareness and respect for their agenda as well as my own within this process. Even though this dissertation is not designed as an applied research project, it demonstrates that it is possible to include these methodologies, working towards transforming social realities, without disrupting or weakening the main focus.

CHAPTER 5

LOCAL PEACEBUILDING, NATIONAL PEACEBUILDING: LIBERTEÑO MUSICS, POST-CONFLICT, AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Peacebuilding: National Agendas and Local Programs

The current political situation in Colombia, where a peace agreement has been signed between the FARC-EP[34] rebel group and the central government after more than fifty years of conflict, is historically unprecedented. One consequence has been that nearly every state institution has been involved in the design and implementation of post-conflict and peacebuilding programs. As I have discussed, the state-funded Collective Reparation Plan (CRP) in Libertad has involved, among other things, using traditional music practices as a strategy to regenerate the social fabric of the community, a task conceived of in part as rebuilding strong interpersonal relationships among individuals and groups through a complex array of "neighbor interactions" (McMillan and Chavis 1986: 7). Communal cohesion tends to be one of the key aspects of public policies that guide peacebuilding programs in Colombia more generally. However, such intents and goals are more easily listed on paper than put into practice in the local territories.

In this chapter, I focus on the ways different actors understand the potential for using expressive culture and music in community- and peacebuilding programs. I will also discuss some of the assumptions on which their approaches are based. I explore some of the differences between third-party programs—by which I mean programs developed by outside government agencies and NGOs—that claim to be engaging in "music for peace"

[34] Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army).

programs in Libertad, and music initiatives that aim at peacebuilding from a local and grassroots perspective. I argue that, even though program officials and community members in Libertad agree on the utility, potential, and cultural appropriateness of using music practices in constructing peace, they have divergent ideas about the roles music can and should play in these processes. Some local musicians actively use traditional musics as core elements in their efforts to increase communal cohesion, to preserve local traditions, and to address social issues such as intergenerational tensions. Some third-party program officials, on the other hand, tend to see music projects in Libertad from one of two different perspectives: 1) viewing music as raw material to develop potentially successful popular music products for the media and culture industries; or 2) designing local folkloric music and dance programs—understanding "folkloric" as reified and staged expressions of local traditional cultural practices aimed at representing local culture to outside audiences—intended to keep children and young people busy and away from risky social situations, such as those involving drugs and violence.

Using the first approach, program officials have focused on supporting activities to teach local artists what might be labeled "industry skills," such as those related to concert and media production. Activities designed from the second perspective aim to create local folklore groups, an activity that is part of broader processes of folklorization in Colombia and beyond. The objectives framed through these two perspectives, however, are arguably different from those pursued by some local musicians as they carry out their peacebuilding agendas. Although many of these third-party programs include music and other artistic practices, because they do not conceive of music as a social process from a grassroots

perspective, or account for the validity of local histories, they tend to treat the development of arts programs primarily as an indicator of "socioeconomic development."

This disparity between many program officials and local activists also helps to illustrate differences between developmentalist and culturalist approaches to peacebuilding, which I discuss in the first section of this chapter. My analysis of these two tendencies, as they have manifested through the implementation of programs in Libertad, shows that understandings about music that guide public policy and program design often remain abstract and separated from the social realities and experiences of local participants working within the programs. A number of examples illustrate that a developmentalist approach to music in public policy is still dominant in Colombia. In spite of more recent trends in the interdisciplinary scholarship on the potential roles the arts may play in development and peacebuilding, the Colombian state peacebuilding programs, such as the CRP, are largely framed as post-conflict alleviation strategies and tend to lack a theoretical framework within which to conceive of music as locally constructed sociocultural practices. Program officials have only recently started to embrace musical practice as a social practice related to larger social processes, meaningful beyond the realms of the "fine arts" or "entertainment."

I argue that a culturalist approach to music and the arts in Colombian post-conflict public policy would greatly facilitate the potential of these practices to positively impact processes of conflict transformation. A culturalist approach focuses on the "particular" and how music operates as a social force within specific localized historical and sociocultural contexts, understanding that music and its related practices and symbols can play diverse roles in diverse social situations. Such an approach acknowledges and builds upon people's

own local histories, expressions, and ideologies, and it highlights local creative processes. Therefore, given the diversity of musical traditions and social practices associated with music in Colombia, as well as the need to create spaces for the acknowledgment and expression of the victims of the internal armed conflict, I argue that this approach is more efficient in catering to the victims' needs. The culturalist approach requires an understanding of the local contexts, functions, and ideologies of expressive culture within social groups in particular contexts. Thus, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, programs will vary in relation to these factors within different local communities. In a multicultural nation like Colombia, such an approach requires designing programs that attend to local histories and contemporary issues as well as to beliefs about and practices of expressive culture.

Such an approach is particularly important in post-conflict communities where elite oppression, paramilitary occupation, and violence have shaped the sociocultural realities of communities for several decades. Additionally, this approach is important because policy-makers in Colombia fail to address the discussions and reflections it entails, and therefore it reveals unacknowledged biases and assumptions about the understanding and potential of music and music practices in post-conflict settings and peacebuilding.

Theories of the Roles of Music in Contexts of Conflict and Peacebuilding

Ethnomusicological research on music and post-conflict has been recently framed within a larger discussion regarding the relations between music and violence and/or music and peace (Sandoval 2016a, Kartomi 2010, Pettan 2010, O'Connell 2010). By ethnomusicological research I refer to a tradition of music scholarship that stems from the field of comparative musicology in the early twentieth century, and that has evolved into

the study of music within the historical context of society and culture. Ethnomusicological research understands music in the broad specturm of cultural diversity not only as (although including) musical sound, but also as complex sets of ideas and practices determined by specific social, historical, and cultural contexts.

This recent trend toward analyzing the roles of music in war from an ethnomusicological perspective and using ethnographic methods started around the 1990s. Many early publications emphasized the need to conduct research on music as part of culture and/or in cultural contexts, particularly within the extreme social situation of warfare. A main argument articulated in these 1990s studies, and further developed by ethnomusicologists since the 2000s, is based on the idea that music is not only or inherently a peaceful practice but also has been used for confrontation, war, armed resistance, intimidation, and even torture. Classic examples of this approach are the works of Suzanne Cusick on the US Army's use of music for torture in detention camps and other settings (Cusick 2006, 2008) and David McDonald's research on music as resistance in occupied Palestine (McDonald 2006, 2009, 2013). Other ethnomusicological studies address cases of music and war in which researchers were involved and/or impacted personally, including publications by Pettan about conflicts in Kosovo (2003), Araujo about violence in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro (2006), and Birenbaum about violence in Colombia and representations of culture in Afro-Colombian music (2007).

Starting in the early 2010s, many studies also focused on the enormous potential of music to address reconstruction, rehabilitation, and reconciliation in post-conflict and peacebuilding situations (Pettan 2010, O'Connell 2010, Impey 2013, Sandoval 2016a, among others). In this sense, a stronger relationship was formed between music and

war/peace studies in ethnomusicology and the so-called "applied" approaches in the field.[35] Kartomi (2010), Pettan (2010), and O'Connell (2010) all acknowledge the difference between ethnomusicological studies of music in war and research on music and peace, yet they also recognize the relationship between these two social situations. Beyond understanding the role of music in conflict—and the extreme social, economic, bodily, and emotional nature of situations of war, one of the topics of Pettan's inquiries—these scholars discuss whether music can also play a constructive social role within such destructive settings. To conceive of potential routes for change and transformation, Pettan proposes the idea of a war-peace continuum that frames conflict as a process. Stemming from two of Daniel Sheehy's four classic principles for applied ethnomusicology, cited by Jeff Todd Titon's (1992), Pettan argues that, "the war-peace continuum is a particularly suitable ground for rethinking the 'barriers between academics and applied work' and for reminding ourselves about the 'ethical responsibilities in regard to those whose music and lives we study'" (Titon 1992: 317; quoted in Pettan 2010: 188).[36]

Building upon this concept of a continuum, Elaine Sandoval wrote that potential diverse situations range from one end of this continuum to the other. Before discussing intervention programs, she argues, situations such as the emergence of seeds of conflict, the climax of violent confrontation, post-conflict and peacebuilding need to be clearly historicized within particular social and political contexts because the roles of music within different war-peace contexts can be heterogeneous. It can be inferred from her statements

[35] As Kartomi argues, in spite of sometimes being dubbed examples of "applied ethnomusicology," studies that are not directed at practical actions that lead toward social transformation are not good examples of applied research (2010: 454).

[36] These four principles as defined by Sheehy are: "1. developing new "frames" for musical performance, 2. "feeding back" musical models to the communities that created them, 3. Providing community members access to strategic models and conservation techniques, and 4. developing broad, structural solutions to broad problems." (Sheehy 1992: 330-331)

that the practicality and appropriateness of the war-peace continuum concept in ethnomusicology is directed more to its potential for addressing larger social situations and positioning a critical eye for music practices, events, and ideas within such contexts than as a blanket statement for determining fixed functions and roles of music in war/peace situations (Sandoval 2016a).

The study of music and peacebuilding is interdisciplinary, with scholars from fields such as conflict transformation, music therapy, development studies, and governance contributing to it since the 2000s. Most of the studies within these fields are meant to address interventions that, in one way or another, use the arts (including music) as a tool for peacebuilding. Craig Zelizer, for example, discusses "arts-based peacebuilding" as positioned within a larger framework of civil-society based initiatives for peacebuilding, writing that "such activities might range from joint economic projects, to grassroots mediation and dialogue programs" (Zelizer 2003: 63). Based on methodologies from the field of conflict transformation, Shank and Schirch establish a framework categorizing four basic models for strategically using the arts for peacebuilding: 1) to wage conflict nonviolently, 2) to reduce direct violence, 3) to transform relationships, and 4) to build capacity (Shank and Schirch 2008: 4-8). These four categories also relate, in succession, to stages of conflict/peace in the war-peace continuum. Only the latter two categories, transforming relationships and building capacity, relate to the Libertad case, where programs are implemented in a post-conflict situation with the aim of reconstructing peaceful relations and rehabilitating the community. Proposing a framework with similar assumptions about music interventions in the war-peace continuum, Sandoval groups together studies that address the "music and peace" end of this continuum in three

categories: music geard toward ending violent conflict, music in dealing with the aftermath of conflict, and music in preventing violent conflict (Sandoval 2016a). The last category, prevention of future conflict, is also useful for analyzing a pre-conflict phase. However, I will discuss it as a post-conflict issue concerned with breaking the cycle of violence.

These proposed frameworks are useful as we work to expand our understanding of the peacebuilding capacity of interventions that use music or the arts in conflict transformation. These frameworks help us to position music within larger process of development within conflict/peace situations (Sandoval 2016), as well as to identify specific music and arts initiatives and actions that are potentially constructive in such settings (Shank and Schirch 2008: 15-16). These theories, however, do not tell us about the material in itself—about what music, cultural, and/or artistic material is used and why—or how practices using this material "transform relationships" or "build capacity," for instance. Thus, through my research on the case of Libertad, I propose a basic framework for understanding the ways music interventions are conceived in Colombian public policy, and for understanding how underlying ideas and assumptions about music determine how these interventions evolve and take place, thus directly affecting their efficacy and outcomes.

Music and Colombian Public Policy: Developmentalism and Culturalism

Government agencies, NGOs, and multilateral organizations have embraced post-conflict initiatives that include music and arts programs to transform relationships and build capacity, using diverse approaches. Assumptions about music in current Colombian public policy and programs can be identified as stemming from either "developmentalist" or "culturalist" perspectives. The developmentalist perspective sees music from the logic

of socioeconomic development and, consequently, includes neoliberal ideas about "progress," "spectacle," and "welfare." This paradigm is common in some policies related to cultural entrepreneurship, musical education, and psychosocial rehabilitation. They frequently use top-down approaches to decision-making, as well as assumptions about the universality of pre-established western values about music, often neglecting local histories, as well as their contexts and meanings. Here, I understand "western values about music" as the dominant narratives that have shaped the concepts, behaviors, and aesthetics associated with classical academic European musical traditions as well as with the music industries that emerged from the context of the international expansion of capitalism in the early 20th century.

Programs using a culturalist approach to music, on the other hand, usually try to challenge these established dominant notions about music associated with modernizing or marketplace frameworks and instead conceive of music as a cultural practice with local social value. These initiatives are sometimes also designed as participatory programs, embracing bottom-up collaborative practices, yet this is not always the case. Institutional programs that aim at "cultural recovery" are many times designed as top-down initiatives. I will discuss two types of programs that can be framed within this larger paradigm of cultural recovery initiatives (as in folkloric festivals and intangible cultural heritage initiatives) and local communal projects (such as AFM in Libertad).

Fig. 7. Music and policy/programs in post-conflict Colombia:

1. Developmentalist Paradigm: as seen in programs that emphasize

a. Cultural entrepreneurship and the culture industries; associated with popular music
b. Occupational health and socioeconomic development; associated with Western classical musics.
c. Health services and music therapy; associated with "universal" healing sounds.

** Musical values assumed to be "universal"*
** Top- down approach to implementation*

2. Culturalist Paradigm

a. Cultural recovery and folklorization; associated with a concept of folklore as performance.
b. Cultural recovery and identification of intangible cultural heritage; associated with local cultural traditions.
c. Communal rehabilitation and local cultural projects; focused on local music practices.

Developmentalist Approaches to Music and Peacebuilding in Colombia

The rapid growth of the Colombian music industry since the 1990s, which in part can be attributed to massive success of Colombian rock and vallenato musics in Latin America, was accompanied by the emergence of an independent music industry, inspired partially by the aesthetics of world beat and world music. This independent music industry included the different inflections of this aesthetic, such as more "traditional" renditions of local musics as well as hybridized local musics that incorporated elements from international popular musics (rock, jazz, pop, reggae, etc.) in stylistic, contextual, performative, economic, or visual ways (Gómez 2015; cf. Turino 1998). Hence, a "new Colombian musics" category emerged as a label for these new musics, which were rising as signs of a reshaped Colombianity in the postmodern context of neoliberalism,

globalization, and commodification of local cultural resources. In this approach, cultural entrepreneurship becomes a key goal in the socioeconomic and professional development of local musicians. Policies of administrative decentralization also pushed privatization models that cut public funding for culture and the arts, forcing local artists to engage with the market and professionalize their activity in new ways. Mimicking national economic models where the culture and creative industries represent key shares of national revenues, such as those of Germany and the United States, the Ministry of Culture started developing a cultural entrepreneurship policy line in the 2000s, a policy line that became established in 2008 with the creation of this Ministry's Cultural Entrepreneurship Group.

Several programs to generate and support local cultural entrepreneurship initiatives, frequently targeted at musicians and musical production, started taking place with state funding. These include activities such as cultural (musical) markets and business fairs, the development of recording studios and other aspects of an infrastructure for musical production in several urban and rural localities, research centers focused on the development of the creative industries, and the establishment of networks of entrepreneurs to work in every part of the production chain (Mincultura GEC). This developmentalistic logic permeated the implementation of many programs oriented towards developing victimized and impoverished communities from regions whose music was starting to resonate with the demands of national and global creative industries, which valued "native" sounds from "exotic" places with "tribal" grooves and "authentic" melodies associated with the past. While many local artists managed to adapt their projects to these structures and benefitted from them, many did not because this approach does not foster community-building or rehabilitation and maintenance of communal ties, which are

sometimes the main goals of these local music projects. The entrepreneurship initiatives embraced projects that were considered to have the potential to succeed commercially in specific niche markets, usually employing top-down decision making processes that characterize the operation of the industry, based on capitalistic ideas about the needs of the market.

Also from a developmentalist perspective, but using different language in a discourse about culture and the arts, national cultural policy has been oriented towards the sponsorship and development of the "fine arts," devoting most of its budget towards related programs. This has been the case since the creation of the Instituto Colombiano de Cultura (Colombian Institute of Culture-Colcultura) in 1968, which in 1997 became the Ministry of Culture, as per Law 397 of 1997, also known as the Culture General Law. Nonetheless, this policy also recognizes cultural diversity in Colombia and its role in the construction of national identities. Budgets for the latter type of program is much smaller, since folklore is considered a "lesser" kind of art, and programs sometimes follow dominant nationalistic notions of "national folklore." This type of approach has privileged funding for the fine arts by arguing that they foster "peaceful coexistence" by creating spaces for creativity where children and youngsters can use their free time productively, avoiding involvement in illegal armed groups or other harmful activities.

With this aim in mind, the Programa Nacional de Bandas (National Brass-Bands Program) was created in the late 1990s, later becoming the Plan Nacional de Música para la Convicencia (Music for Peaceful Coexistence National Program, or National Music Program) in 2002. The National Music Program is divided into six areas: musical training and education, research, creation/composition, entrepreneurship, provision of instruments

and materials, circulation, and cultural work. From these areas, musical training and education have been developed as the core of the National Music Program and are focused on establishing band schools in all of the over one thousand Colombian municipalities. Other relevant programs from the PNMC have been its symphonic orchestras program (which supports student and professional orchestras all over Colombia), its cultural entrepreneurship initiatives to support recording studios in the regions, and its editorial project, which has released around fifty-seven publications mostly related to musical training and education.

Since its foundation, this National Music Program has incorporated the idea of using music as a means of constructing peace from an occupational health perspective, which means keeping the vulnerable population occupied in activities considered to be both constructive and part of an integral education in which basic knowledge about "the arts" is expected. In some cases, these music schools became important centers of communal activity, with repertoires and practices from national and international brass band ensembles. Brass bands are incredibly versatile and pedagogic ensembles; they allow for the possibility of large groups of people and employ a wide array of repertoire and musical styles. They also rely upon knowledge of particular forms of music theory and notational practices. Brass bands have a long tradition in Colombia, and for centuries they have been a site for training musicians, playing for public events, developing local repertoires, and serving as versatile popular and academic ensembles. However, the school bands targeted in the current programs are located in the urban areas of municipalities, thus leaving rural corregimientos—often epicenters of previous conflicts—uncovered. Additionally, these ensembles, while important historically, are just one of hundreds

musical practices that have emerged from local and popular practices in diverse regions of Colombia.

A complementary, but much smaller, Traditional Music Schools Program was also implemented by the Ministry in certain areas, but band schools still predominate in the national policy. Band practices in Colombia can range from representing what organizers consider to be local and/or ethnic aesthetics to aesthetics associated with staged concert performances. Depending on the instructors, the role of local cultural traditions, assumptions about music, and other factors, these local band schools have sometimes perpetuated dominant national values and further marginalized local musical traditions, as explained in my 2017 article about the National Music Bands Contest of Paipa, in Andean Colombia (Rojas 2017: 217-221).

Another way to tackle the implementation of music programs in the context of post-conflict communities from a developmentalist approach is based on theories from certain branches of music therapy. With the assumption that music can have healing properties come other foundational ideas in classic music therapy (López Vinader 2008), including assumptions that music is a universal phenomenon and that its physical and aural qualities (acoustics, vibrations, waves, resonance, and so on) can directly heal disorders in the human body and mind. Based on such assumptions, these aural "essences" in music can be shaped to spark beneficial and healing properties in clinical settings. I understand "clinical settings" as controlled spaces, usually labs, that are purposefully designed to be "isolated" from daily life and other settings of quotidian social interaction in order to facilitate more "objective" data collection in clinical research. However, these labs are not really isolated since they exist and evolve in time and space, and they are deeply entangled within the

tradition and history of western positivist science. While this approach has many followers, patients, and practitioners, which speaks to its presumed efficacy, it is based on a vision of what music can do and be in the human experience that only accounts for music as sound, not for its history or the sociocultural context in which it is produced. The strict clinical setting of some music therapy programs can make it difficult to incorporate locally constructed values, ideas, and meanings as part of the therapeutic repertoire of "healing" music practices. These programs tend not to emphasize the historical and sociocultural roles of music, including practices known to have especially deep meanings for some patients, such as local, ethnic, ritual, or spiritual traditional musics.

Some initiatives conducted with Colombian victim communities have focused on songwriting workshops, drum circles, or other kinds of collective activities to provide creative spaces for people to deal with trauma. Although some of these initiatives sometimes engaged with cathartic modes of expressions believed to enhance rehabilitation and reconciliation processes, they have not necessarily utilized local cultural aesthetics. One such case is what María Elisa Pinto documented in Colombia, where she conducted songwriting and listening exercises with both ex-combatants and victims with the aim of exploring the potential for music as tool for reconciliation (Pinto 2011). Pinto discusses musical compositions written by victims and soldiers—mostly in rap and vallenato rhythms, the latter being a highly commercial Colombian music genre—and their effects for reconciliation in controlled listening settings (Pinto 2011). Other implementations are framed according to analogous principles, such as with vallenato songwriters from the village of Las Pavas (Bolívar Department), a community forcibly displaced by the paramilitaries in the 2000s. In this case, Fundación Chasquis (Colombia) and Connact

Association (Switzerland) recorded thirteen songs from Las Pavas local singers that narrated their history of violence, displacement, and resilience, in the voices of four local songwriters (El Tiempo 2013). These local performers claim that this has been a good experience and that they have been able to voice their own narratives of dispossessions in order to express their sorrows as well as to sensitize their listening audiences. Even though local vallenato musics were recorded, the aim of the project was to produce a recording to serve as document of other processes developed in Las Pavas.

Culturalist Approaches in Colombia

The culturalist approach to music as peacebuilding in Colombia, at the most basic level, views music as a social practice with meanings that are embedded, constructed, and partially determined by cultural and historical contexts. From this perspective, music is understood as traditional cultural expressions with aesthetics that belong to symbolic universes rooted in their communities' territories and histories. This perspective accounts for many musical expressions have tended to be historically excluded from developmentalist approaches, since the latter mostly adhere to values and practices rooted in the western art traditions—many times considered "universal," as in the "universal repertoire" of classical music. Initiatives stemming from the culturalist approach can take a top-down, a bottom-up, or a collaborative approach to policy design and implementation. These programs in part reflect ideas that emerged in the Colombian transition into a multicultural and neoliberal nationalist era after the constitutional reforms of 1991. These reforms, among other things, generated legislation to both account for and legitimize ethnic minority groups and their cultures, while simultaneously developing cultural entrepreneurship and cultural recovery programs. The first programs were targeted at the

development of the culture industries, while the latter were state-supported initiatives aimed at preserving local cultural traditions—sometimes using them for social/political agendas—and reclaiming them as part of the new multicultural Colombian nation-state (Ochoa 2000).

In the mid-2000s the Colombian Ministry of Culture started working on policies and programs to adhere to the 2003 Unesco Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This effort became concrete in legislation passed in 2009 to regulate national processes for the designation and safeguarding of traditional cultural expressions to be included in the recently created national lists of intangible cultural heritage. These projects focus on the collective and participatory development of strategic preservation plans for particular local or regional traditions and/or cultural expressions—such as languages, oral traditions, forms of social organization, traditional cosmologies, traditional medicine practices, popular arts, festive events, and religious and culinary practices—whose communal leaders request consideration from the Ministry of Culture (Ministry of Internal Affairs 2009, Rojas 2017). This request leads to a process of evaluation and characterization of the cultural expressions in relation to criteria such as their relevance, representativity, collective nature, current state, democratic nature, and the assumed responsibility of their bearers to their own ecological and sociocultural surroundings, among other aspects. These criteria are used to determine whether the cultural expression should be included in the national lists. A positive assessment means that a Special Safeguarding Plan (SSP) must be collectively designed by local/regional cultural leaders and the Ministry of Culture to create strategies and commitments to guarantee the preservation of the practice.

While these initiatives are often geared towards generating recognition, cultural recovery, and social reconstruction, having been acknowledged and praised by some scholars, intangible cultural heritage projects also have been criticized for becoming a new incarnation of international or nationalistic folklore agendas, co-opting cultural practices of local or regional minorities to reshape their meanings and include them as part of the "national culture" narratives that are often marked with centralistic biases. Colombian intangible heritage practices often use democratic and participatory processes, are focused on local concerns, and understand local traditions from a fluid and post-modern perspective. Thus these practices give evidence of a positive change in relation to previous state initiatives to acknowlege local cultural traditions, which have tended to be constructed from a top-down perspective and without involving the local actors. However, pre-existing local hierarchies and regimes of control often surface during these cultural negotiation processes. Additionally, these national policies are implemented in hundreds of localities, making making follow-up programs very difficult. Another wide critique has been that some processes of intangible cultural heritage co-opt and commodify local traditions, turning them into profitable products for the tourism industry, entertainment, or cultural diplomacy, rather than attending to issues such as the sustainability of their communities of culture specialists (Kirschemblatt-Gimblett 2004).

A culturalist approach has also been embraced in certain cases of psychosocial rehabilitation, one of the main lines in the national victims' policies, using local cultural and musical traditions and folklore in the context of national peacebuilding or post-conflict initiatives. For example, Afro-Colombian *alabao* songs—a traditional funerary and devotional a capella genre—was prominent when a group of victims and traditional singers

from the town of Bojayá (in the Colombian northern Pacific region) was invited to participate during key protocol events related to the final phase of the peace agreement between FARC-EP and the Colombian government.[37] In Libertad, several initiatives have been conducted to revitalize "local" cultural traditions, such as the local folkloric festival I briefly described in Chapter 3, sponsored and organized by the Victims Unit and Bogotá-based NGO Origen Circular. In this dissertation, I undesrtand the term "folkloric" as the result of "a processing of local traditions for external consumption," a process which John McDowell calls "folklorization" (McDowell 2010: 183).

Since late September, 2016, the Ministry of Culture has been implementing a post-conflict arts program throughout the María Mountains region, funding the creation of a folkloric dance group for children and teenagers. While this arts program is based on an idea of music as rooted within tradition ("local musics") and as a prominent element in the wider network of social processes, its ideas about "local culture" tend to be influenced by more rigid classic structuralist notions of traditional music, which tend to involve idealized models that can be applied in larger contexts. Indeed, such ideas of "local traditional musics" are pervasive in folkloricized and canonized traditions that have been shaped by regional cultural elites for decades through festivals and traditional music schools to define narratives of regional identity. As a consequence, while these types of cultural recovery projects use local and/or regional traditional musics, essentially, as tools for occupational health (as in the National Music Program example) and as cultural performances to

[37] The group Las Alabadoras de Bojayá (The Praise Singers of Bojayá) sang when FARC members visited Bojayá in 2015 to apologize to residents for the worst massacre in the Colombian internal armed conflict. During this confrontation between rightwing paramilitaries and FARC members on May 2, 2002, a gas-cylinder bomb fell on the church where civilians were taking refuge, killing over one hundred people, mostly women and children. The group also sang when the Final Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict was signed in Cartagena, between FARC and the Colombian government, on September 26, 2016.

represent local/regional cultures publicly, they follow more long-standing practices associated with folklorization rather than emphasizing local processes, variations, transformations, and specific meanings constructed in the midst of local social interactions in their communities.

In Colombian public policy, including policy related to music programs in victim communities, what policy workers call the "differential approach"—which takes into account demographic diversity, age groups, gender, ethnicity, class, diverse abilities, and other specific populations— is recent. This perspective differs from earlier ideas from the National Music Program, mostly based on European brass-band practices and music-theory education. Despite efforts to transform several components of the National Music Program into multicultural and diverse initiatives, its main focus is not Colombian traditional and locally developed musical expressions, but the national classical orchestras and band-schools programs. In the current context of "post-agreement" Colombia, referring to the official "Final Agreement for the Termination of Conflict", so-called "post-conflict" national policies are mandatory in all state institutions. As consequence, the Ministry of Culture initiated a music and dance regional program, which follows the differential approach, in the María Mountains region: The Sensorial Expedition through the María Mountains (Sensorial Expedition).

The Sensorial Expedition program aims to cover every municipality in the region while focusing on developing work in the rural areas (*veredas* and corregimientos). Historically, the Ministry of Culture has tended to focus its programs in the urban centers of the municipalities; thus, the Sensorial Expedition represents an effort, in words of the National Music Program director at the time Alejandro mantilla, to push towards a more

"local" approach in order to cater to the rural population. This newly implemented program has two main areas of activity: 1) activities to "strengthen" cultural practices in communities that already have established cultural programs up and running, and 2) "creation labs" for communities that only recently have started to develop their own cultural programs (as in the case of Libertad). Libertad is one of the chosen corregimientos for the San Onofre municipality, and a "strengthening practices" process began there in September 2016. This program involves the creation of two local folkloric dance groups (for children and teenagers), for which they hired Ralam as local facilitator. Thus, today Ralam not only runs AFM but is also the folkloric dance instructor for the local Sensorial Expedition program. The materials taught in these dance groups, though, are skills that Ralam is learning directly in the teacher-training workshops part of this program (conducted by the regional cultural NGO Corporación Cabildo). Therefore, what is being taught through the Sensorial Expedition in Libertad are canonical, folkloric dances contained in dance manuals rather than locally developed bullerengue and cumbia dance styles (which are not necessarily identical with the canonized forms taught in the "folkloric dance" scene).

While the Sensorial Expedition program aims at "rehabilitating the social fabric" through traditional music and dance, it does so in ways that differ from projects run by AFM and Chabelo in Libertad since 2015. Local projects such as this, that build from local organizations, use a bottom-up methodology and local cultural materials to address specific, local, social needs; they are examples of projects based in the "culturalist" paradigm from a "local cultural projects" perspective. While I have described several different approaches to music and peacebuilding in post-agreement Colombia, I argue that

actions that stem from locally developed programs and that are based in intimate knowledge of local processes, organizations, and their needs are a productive way to utilize music and the arts more generally as tools of peacebuilding. We can see this kind of process at work in the case of, for example, reduction of intergenerational tension through music in Libertad.

In the next section I will describe my experience accompanying AFM to a gig at a music business fair at the Caribbean Cultural Market 2015 in Cartagena, where the band was invited to play a showcase performance[38] and to do an "elevator pitch" for promoters. This experience proved to be a useful ethnographic test site for witnessing how divergent logics and assumptions about musical success played out simultaneously by different actors and stakeholders in relation to AFM.

Photo 21. Ralam and other members of Afro-Música showing Rolo and Simón their new songs while getting a haircut. Other members are monitoring the PA system.

[38] The showcase performances at the Caribbean Cultural Market (as well as at many other music fairs and expos) are shows officially programmed by the event curator presented in stages specifically oriented towards an audience of music promoters and programmers that attend the event.

The 2015 Caribbean Cultural Market in Cartagena: Resonance and Dissonance

The Caribbean Cultural Market (CCM) in the city of Cartagena has been one of the most important music business fairs in the twenty-first-century Colombian music industry. Its first event was held in 2008, and it has since become one of the major Colombian music fairs, where those involved in music and dance projects—a with a focus on Caribbean and/or ethnic aesthetics catered towards a "world music" audience—can meet national and international programmers and promotors to generate business opportunities. In its ten years, the CCM has established itself as an essential annual event for artists, producers, cultural workers, and programmers, and has played a role in increasing national and international networks of music circulation for Colombian music and dance groups. Among those participating in this cultural market are representatives from important national theaters, universities and other cultural institutions, national festivals, record labels, and distribution specialists. These include organizers of music festivals in Europe and the United States and venues such as the Carnegie Hall, the Lincoln Center, and the Chicago School of Folk Music in the US, among others. The event includes showcase performances, business meetings, sales pitches, academic talks, workshops, and discussion tables. Modelled like other international "world music" fairs and markets, such as Womex, the CCM has been an important event in the new Colombian music industry.

As I explained in Chapter 4, AFM's participation in this event was the initiative of Isaías Guerrero, a Colombian graduate student studying at the University of Notre Dame and a collaborator with AFM during the Fall of 2015. After the unusual admission of the

band to this music market,[39] the Victims Unit decided to fund AFM's trip to Cartagena and requested that I prepare and accompany the band on this trip. In Libertad, the members of AFM were very excited about this opportunity. Great expectations started to build in relation to the event: comments about "making it big," or getting "picked by a producer" became more common. For these impoverished young people, the event was a chance to improve their living conditions. When I discussed this event in Chapter 4, I focused on our collaborative work with AFM before and during the event. In this section, I will describe the clash of expectations between AFM's director, Ralam, and music producers and Victims Unit officials Simón González and Antonio Alarcón ("El Rolo"), who had previously collaborated with AFM in the production of the song "Bullenrap."

El Rolo is a media producer and journalist from Bogotá, who worked during the 2010s at *Shock Magazine*, the largest "independent music" magazine in Colombia. At the time, he also was working at the Victims Unit, directing a national multimedia project. The Colombian "independent music" scene represented in *Shock Magazine* is an emergent industry based on musical products influenced by the aesthetics of globalized styles considered "Anglo" in Colombia (rock, pop, reggae, rap, funk), globalized Latin sounds (salsa, reguetón, cumbia), and a slight "tint" of traditional Colombian sounds (in either "traditional" or "hybridized" forms) that participants consider to be appealing to diverse audiences, including a "world music" audience. Simón González is a musician and musical producer, also from Bogotá, and co-leader of the electronic-Colombian world beat band Radio Rebelde Sound System, who was working at the national-level Collective

[39] The Caribbean Cultural Market in Cartagena is known as a meeting place for cultural workers, entrepreneurs, musicians, artists, and performers of all kinds. However, only recently did it open a new space, called the Knowledges Encounter, held at the Cartagena Museum of History, where informal gatherings of "ethnic" artists and smaller showcase performances take place throughout the day.

Reparation Direction of the Victims Unit. Radio Rebelde has two records, combining, in their own words, the sounds of "salsa, cumbia, gaita, reggae roots, and *currualo*,[40] with the fast and aggressive beats of drum and bass, 2-step, and dub-step" (Radio Rebelde Facebook profile).

At the time, these producers were eagerly engaged with the members of the AFM band, trying to empower them through means with which they were familiar: the music industry. In the next pages, I will analyze the dissonance in the expectations of an imagined "successful" AFM project, commercially sustainable as a "music business," on one hand, and increasing its local impact and local base through community-based activities, on the other.

Afro-Música Arrives at Cartagena and the Caribbean Cultural Market

At 1:30 am on Friday, November 29, 2015, I met with the eighteen members of Afro-Música who were travelling to Cartagena met to take the only bus that goes daily from Libertad to this city. This old bus leaves town at 2:00 a.m., and it is always packed with people as well as produce that farmers send to the Bazurto city market in Cartagena. Because of the season, this time the bus was packed with sacks of lime and with buckets of *suero* (a regional kind of sour cream), creating an atmosphere in which the aroma of citrus fruit mixed with that of non-refrigerated dairy products. The seats were tight and the cushions broken and uneven. After four hours of travel, we arrived in Bazurto, where we took taxis to a hotel that had been booked for us by the Victims Unit. There, we met Simón, the musical producer from the Victims Unit and one of the main supporters of this initiative. He and Rolo, also from the Victims Unit, prepared a one-minute video to

[40] *Currulao* is a traditional Afro-Colombian music style from the Pacific Coast of Colombia of which the sounds of the *marimba de chonta* xylophone, traditional drumming, and multilayered singing are characteristic.

accompany AFM's elevator pitch, which was going to take place that day after lunch. We ate breakfast and took some time off before meeting for for lunch and going to the event.

We practiced this elevator pitch a lot. Based on a simple method of addressing the main points of a short and convincing speech, we did two workshops and two meetings (plus many rehearsals) in which we collectively discussed these five points: a description of the project, the problem it addresses, actions taken to solve the problem, results from these actions, and current needs.[41] The heightened collective behavior of AFM was a strong weapon to make the pitch dynamic. First, they would do what, at the time, was their signature chant, led by Ralam:

Ralam: ¿Quiénes somos?	Ralam: Who are we?
Chorus: ¡Afro-Música!	Chorus: Afro-Musica!
R: ¿Con quién?	R: With whom?
Ch: ¡Con Chabelo!	Ch: With Chabelo!
R: ¿De dónde?	R: From where?
Ch: ¡De Libertad!	Ch: Libertad!
R: ¿Para quién?	R: For whom?
Ch: ¡Para el mundo!	Ch: For the world!

Then Ralam would introduce the project as Simón played the one-minute video that the Victims Unit Multimedia team had prepared. After that, Gleison, Paloma, Mr. Edins, Faris, and JM performed their practiced excerpt of around forty-five seconds each. Chabelo was standing right next to them the entire time. To finish, they all sang a fragment of one of their hip-hop songs, "Un pueblo que sueña" ("A Town that Dreams"):

[41] A transcription of the entire sales pitch can be found in Appendix 1 of this dissertation.

(Sung by everyone)	(Sung by everybody)
Si quieres ver a Libertad	If you want to see Libertad
Un pueblo en que se puede soñar	A town in which you can dream
Pues yo te la voy a mostrar	Well, I will show it to you
Ven conmigo y vive la realidad.	Come with me and you can live reality.
(Rap)	(Rap)
Caminando por las calles	Walking through the streets
De mi pueblo voy	Of my town, I'm going
Yo me siento muy contento	And I feel very happy
Porque bien estoy	'Cause well I'm doing
Que lo escuche todo el mundo,	Let everybody know
Liberteño soy	That Liberteño I am
Por mi gente aquí cantando	Because of my people
Es que aquí estoy	Is that singing here I am
Caminando por el mundo	Walking through the world
Yo me siento orgulloso	I feel proud
Pero más de haber nacido	But more of having been born
En un pueblo tan hermoso	In such a beautiful town
Con todos mis compañeros	With my all people, I talk
Les hablo del pueblo que sueña	About the town that dreams
Con orgullo les presento	Proudly I present to you
A mi gente liberteña.	The Liberteño peeps.

After five minutes and this musical ending, the audience, made up of national and international programmers and promoters, was visibly excited, clapping intensely and cheering. We were second in a group of six presenters. Other groups were waiting outside the hall for their turn to come in and do their pitch. Because of space and logistics, only seven members of AFM were allowed into the meeting hall, leaving eleven of them outside. This was the first tension I witnessed between the logic of a communitarian project and the structure and needs of the music industry. The second tension would become visible only moments after the pitch, when Simón and Rolo called me aside to discuss with me their concerns about "what we should do" with Ralam, as a leader, and

with the future of AFM as a band, to "make it work." After a short talk, which surprised me because of the patronizing tone that dominated the conversation, we decided to have a conversation with Ralam that night, during the showcase concerts, to discuss with him longer-term visions for AFM.

Divergent Perceptions: Cultural Entrepreneurship vs. Community Building

Rolo and Simón share backgrounds and assumptions about what "musical success" is supposed to be, mediated by their lives and professional careers in the emergent Colombian independent music scene. While Ralam does not share the same experience, he has notions of what "commercial success" means in popular music and understands the difference between that definition and his assumptions about music and community-construction, as we will see later in this section. On the other hand, Rolo and Simón are able to understand music from the perspective of music industry insiders; they see success as being a salient and competitive professional in this industry's regional, national, and global markets. From this perspective, they were worried that, despite the great talent of the members of AFM and Ralam, the project would not be sustainable in the longer term. They predicted that fatigue, lack of opportunities, and unviable goals would lead the project to get "stuck" or eventually collapse and disappear. Therefore, what they intended by talking to Ralam was to make him aware of the turbulent and aggressive realities of the music business. They wanted him to understand that they wanted to support and accompany him to professionalize AFM: to make the group a competitive and successful music project.

When Simón, Rolo, and I talked after the elevator pitch, they were specifically concerned about the size of the performing group (a key issue for touring bands), how to

make the band an economically sustainable project, and how to "produce" the band to "make it work" within the logic and aesthetics of the music industry. They saw something unique in AFM and its bullenrap, and they wanted to help these musicians. I found it very interesting that, for example, they were using as a role model the members of the Afro-Colombian hip-hop trio ChocQuibTown, an internationally successful band that uses elements of Afro-Colombian Pacific Coast music (where they are from) in their songs, but who are more detached from their region (they live in Bogotá) and who do not have community-development as goal. In a similar fashion, they discussed the idea of providing hip-hop history and culture workshops to AFM to teach the members graffiti and breakdancing, ignoring that fact that AFM's main interest at that time was to deepen their knowledge of bullerengue music and that they already are accomplished dancers of Afro-Caribbean styles, such as champeta*, choke, raga,* reguetón*, chirimía,* and what they call *"música africana."* Rolo's and Simon's main goal was to help AFM to prepare a product and get it ready for the market, rather than acknowledge the relevance of the social processes AFM was facilitating in Libertad, which was more aligned with their work as Victims Unit officials facilitating the implementation of Libertad's CRP.

We took the afternoon off at the hotel with the rest of the group, and that night Ralam and I headed towards the historical downtown area of Cartagena. There the CCM showcase performances were taking place, and we were to meet Simón and Rolo. The performances were held on a large stage with full sound and lighting in one of the colonial quarters of the walled city, next to Bolivar Park. Ralam and I watched several Colombian and nationally succesful artists perform for the promoters and programmers, who were mingling in the audience. We also talked to several of them, handing out our business

cards and the EPKs (Electronic Press Kits, which contained photos, videos and AFM's contact information) on thumb-drives that Rolo had prepared. I also had the chance to introduce Ralam to the event organizer, Rafael Ramos, who said he was already aware of the AFM project and its goals. While we were busy being cultural entrepreneurs and pitching AFM as a product to a privileged audience of programmers with social and economic capital to insert the product in the market, I decided to warn Ralam about the meeting that was being set up to discuss making AFM a "professional" project from the perspective of cultural entrepreneurship. I thought the ideas of pressuring him to make the band smaller or to manipulate the aesthetics so that it would lean more towards the global pop sounds of hip-hop were an imposition driven by ideas of success within the music industry. As I saw it, those ideas diverged from the concerns of the youth within the AFM collective. This perception was based on my daily interactions with the members of AFM and the questions I asked them incessantly about their goals, assumptions, practices and expectations.

After telling Ralam in broad brush strokes what the talk was going to be about, I suggested that he think about concrete future goals for his project. I knew he would be asked questions such about AFM's long-term goals and its mission statement and vision? When I confessed to him my concern that attempts to address the needs of the market could potentially weaken the local communal work he and his peers were doing in Libertad, he also confessed to me I had hit on one of his worst fears: having to choose between emerging as an artist or sticking to local communal work. We were watching Yeisson Landero, a regional accordion cumbia ensemble led by the grandson of Colombian cumbia legend Andrés Landero. In silence, we connected with his show, the display of

tunes with an intentionally nostalgic aesthetic, the lights and video, centering the attention on the heir: Yeisson and his accordion. Finally, Ralam broke his silence and shared with me his dream for AFM: to recruit as many young people as possible, not only from Libertad, but from the entire María Mountains region, and to have at least one AFM group of young singers in every single town in the region. He sees clearly that this process entails other activities that AFM also conducts: training local children, involving elders as role models, and working collectively to create new local music practices. He went on to tell me that his community project was more important than becoming a famous artist; the project gives him a purpose. His sights are set on a larger goal of community building, of strengthening of the social fabric through reconstructing intergenerational relationships. From his perspective, the more people involved, the better.

When Simón and Rolo arrived, we grabbed a beer from one of the official street vendors[42] and sat down on a bench at Bolivar Park. There, Simón started by reaffirming his and Rolo's unconditional support for the AFM project. Then, he asked Ralam about his vision of AFM in five years. Ralam was visibly nervous and hesitated. After thinking in silence for a bit, he shared his vision for AFM as a movement spread throughout the region, where communal musical work would be oriented towards addressing social needs of particular communities. He focused on the idea of multiplying the process and making it sustainable. When he was done, Simón said, "See? You never told me your goal was to be on a stage!" That became his pivot point for addressing the issue of the professionalization of the contemporary performance artist.

[42] It is normal to drink beer or other forms of alcohol on Colombian streets, and only recently has it become forbidden in certain cities because of a recently passed (2017) Police Code. However, while drinking heavy alcohol (distilled drinks) on the streets is usually prohibited and controlled, one or two beers are usually not considered a problem by the police, and street beer drinking is allowed in some districts of certain touristic cities, such as Cartagena.

First, Simón discussed the idea of sacrificing personal interests for a career. He said that the music industry is a tough business. His point was meant to let Ralam know that he would have to conform to many of the demands of the industry and market to survive artistically: he would need to compromise. This point was tied to the fact that, at that moment, most band members were singers, and all of them wanted to be like Ralam. However, only few had the talent to stand out as a front person. During that trip, AFM was an eighteen-member band of singers (and dancers), with me playing the alegre drum for a couple of songs and Simón as the DJ. In a way, what Simón and Rolo were implying was that Ralam was a leader who could use some members as back-up, but not necessarily all the kids that followed him around. These statements can be analyzed as part of two core principles of show business: the idea of being a "star" and the perception of people and their talent as decontextualized and mechanical resources to be exploited. Reducing the number of band members made sense because it would make touring and circulation easier and would facilitate financial sustainability. Eighteen people are difficult to move. Related to this idea, Rolo addressed the economic concept of division of labor, suggesting ideas for AFM such as distributing work so that everybody does something different—including work beyond travelling or performing, such as costume-making, choreography, logistics, and so on—to increase value production and sustainability of the project. In his words, according to current industry standards, six to eight travelling musicians were ideal. Rolo mentioned that other bands in the world had emerged from similar contexts of violence, and that they had accommodated their projects and organization to achieve their goals of making their music massively distributed.

During this talk, Ralam remained mostly silent. He barely spoke any words and sometimes, nervously, he would laugh and look to the front at a distance, as if he were thinking very fast. Ralam was feeling accomplished that day because he and AFM had made it to the CCM in Cartagena, but now his collaborators and producers were telling him that it was not really an achievement, only the very beginning of the game; he had the opportunity to sit at the table where achievements were actually earned. Simón asked Ralam what he thought would be an ideal line-up for a touring AFM ensemble. Ralam, not enthusiastic about doing the exercise, started saying names of band members and we all pitched in, contributing our ideas about what would be the best line-up. Eventually, he said that he needed time to think about what we had just discussed, and we went back to the showcases. The Cartagena-based band Caribefunk was playing the last set of the night. We watched it, and soon after the shows were over, Ralam and I headed back to the hotel.

The next morning, Ralam and I attended a talk about Afro-Colombian culture in relation to sustainable development. The speaker, Edi Vega, an Afro-Colombian entrepreneur, presented a route for development and fundraising in which Afro-Colombian cultural projects could be framed either as intangible cultural heritage—thus receiving funds from government or the private sector—or as cultural entrepreneurship processes, sustainable and competitive in the market. Even if a project had the potential for both, the speaker said it was best to focus on one of the two strategies as the core to the project, to fully develop its capacities. I asked Ralam about this argument and whether he saw a contradiction in the future of AFM, being both a community development project and an artistic project with commercial potential. He said he was afraid that, for example, cutting

members off would deteriorate the larger social process and transform the perception of inclusivity and participation that is fundamental for AFM's local success.

Photo 22. Afro-Música practicing for the Caribbean Cultural Market 2015.

Photo 23. Afro-Música and Chabelo at the Caribbean Cultural Market in 2015.

Collective Reparation and Music in Libertad: Assumptions about Music in Program Design and Implementation

AFM's trip to the Caribbean Cultural Market 2015 in Cartagena was paid for by the Victims Unit as part of the local Collective Reparation Plan. All actions implemented in Libertad as part of the CRP must be outlined in the CRP document and must respond to at least one of the five types of collective reparation measures: 1) satisfaction (pain mitigation) and recovery of dignity, 2) communal rehabilitation and the reestablishment of

mental and physical welfare, 3) restitution of lost rights, 4) economic compensation for losses caused by conflict, and 5) prevention and guarantees of non-repetition of violent actions (IOM 2012b: 16). Simón told me he was able get the budget for this "reparation action" through the Satisfaction Direction where he worked. This action aligns with others he and Rolo undertook with music in other CRPs, as part of a Victims Unit joint national strategy between the Satisfaction Direction and the Social Pedagogy multimedia team.

For example, in 2014, as part of a CRP activity in the victim community of Aquitania (Eastern Antioquia region),[43] they got local singer "Arturo" (an alias) to sing "Sueños de paz" ("Dreams of Peace")—a song he had written and produced with Simón—at the arrival of the inaugural parade of the Ibero-American Theater Festival in Bogotá. This festival, which takes place every two years, is one of the largest theater festivals in the world, and its inaugural parade is a massive event that lasts all day long. Millions of people watch it through the media, with around 100,000 people attending the event—50,000 of whom congregate in Bogotá's main square to enjoy the closing acts of this massive parade. During this final event, where the main acts of the inauguration are performed, the Victims Unit managed to include Arturo in the program, singing "Sueños de paz" from the roof of the Senate building a capella but with a powerful amplification system. While they were telling me this anecdote, Rolo and Simón became visibly touched and excited, agreeing that this was a powerful moment of the kind that can change someone's perspective.

[43] The community of Aquitania, in the Central Andean region of Colombia, suffered from intense displacement of their lands in 2003 through military actions taken by the Ninth Front of FARC, who, in a twisted alliance with rightwing Magdalena Medio region paramilitary groups, intended to free up thousands of hectares for large regional and national cattle owners. The paramilitaries, who, at the most obvious level of understanding of the Colombian armed conflict, are military enemies of FARC, complacently allowed them to displace farmers to benefit regional elites.

From this point of view, music projects in collective reparation initiatives entail the idea of connecting local practices, expressions, and performers with larger circuits of music production, circulation, and consumption that are tied to mass spectacle events and the culture industries. The idea of dignifying victims (a satisfaction measure) by exposing their humanity and stories to larger privileged crowds of urban Colombians who never experienced the armed conflict first-hand, is a measure that can be seen as "raising awareness" and a sensitization initiative. While I consider this approach positive—for example, because it enables reflection, empathy, and critical thought about social problems by an outside audience—it does not directly address strategies to solve local social issues. The role of music in the CRP in Libertad, nonetheless, specifically mentions traditional music and dance as means to enhance the rehabilitation process of the community, which is spelled out in the plan and has been promised for years. The plan includes a local traditional music training process with a hired instructor to visit town weekly to maintain one or several local groups, as well teaching traditional regional rhythms and instruments, such as bullerengue and gaita musics. While this example is also seen as a "satisfaction" measure, it comes from a different assumption than Rolo's and Simon's actions, and it views dignifying victims in the local context as a way of empowering them to participate in the larger goal of communal rehabilitation. To date, five years later, the music instructor to advance the official CRP plan for a local music school has not yet been hired.

In this case, we see tensions in the implementation of music programs for victims that have been constructed from the culturalist perspective of "cultural recovery," sometimes through participatory processes and sometimes as top-down initiatives. These initiatives tend to be implemented with different perceptions and assumptions about the

roles of music in social contexts, such as the collective reparation initiatives in Libertad. As part of the Victims Unit's national Social Pedagogy strategy, for instance, the multimedia team Rolo directed had relative freedom to generate communication and media pieces to portray not only the "human side" of victims and their stories, but also the results of collective reparation programs nationally. This agenda pushed some of the most easy-to-mediatize collective reparation efforts, such as music and colorful performance, by idealized individuals who rise with dignity after conflict and tell their stories to mainstream media. Thus, the assumptions about which music practices were included in some CRPs—through concerted participatory efforts—are not always the same assumptions with which these programs are implemented. In some instances, these measures respond to the interests and agendas of specific program officials in charge (i.e., a multimedia team) or to the larger agendas of state institutions (such as the Victims Unit), but not always to locally conceived ideas about music (bullenrap) as carefully designed tools for cultural recovery addressing some previously identified social issues at the local level.

Conclusions: The Culturalist Perspective and Afro-Música as a Grassroots Project

In Chapters 3 and 4, I described the creation and consolidation of AFM as part of the communal-organization process in Libertad and the group's relationships to other local organizations that aim at making Libertad a strong and thriving community. As I explained, AFM organizer Ralam's previous band, Los Dioses, was a militant rap group that criticized how the local leadership was managing the resources of the community, confronting these leaders directly. These factors contributed to marginalizing Los Dioses and excluding it from the CRP. In his work with AFM, however, he managed to change this previous image and was invited to participate in CRP projects.

Ralam has been engaged with music since he was fourteen and has participated in community development and music education programs with the goal of encouraging community members to engage with and care about their neighbors and peers. These programs also want members of the community to understand that they are stronger united than they are divided. He undertook hip-hop training through workshops with the Familia Ayara Foundation, a Bogotá-based NGO that focuses on work with vulnerable communities through hip-hop and related expressive forms, such as dance, visual arts, graffiti, and so on. The Foundation's website explains that the Familia Ayara Foundation embraces hip-hop culture as a "generator of change and as a constructor of better contexts" and uses it as a training tool to "improve the life opportunities of children and young people by enhancing their civil participation" (Familia Ayara Foundation 2018). When Ralam directed the local CRP-funded radio station, he and his crew designed inclusive programming intended to address diverse musical tastes while discussing a wide array of local issues and news.

Ralam is not only a versatile artist who thrives in multiple contexts and media; he is also a person who from an early age has been engaged in activism. His art and projects tend towards social criticism, emancipation, and transformation. Rooted in the local, the AFM project manages to function on a very low budget while sometimes conducting several straight weeks of daily classes and rehearsals. For instance, between December 2015 and January 2016, Ralam, Gleison, Mr. Edins, and JM hung out at Ralam's small house every day and taught around sixty children to play the drums. These children came to his place as early as nine o'clock in the morning, excited because they had heard the song "Bullenrap" and wanted to become like those artists. Through activities such as

teaching children to play bullerengue and gaita musics, AFM played a positive role in strengthening intergenerational relations and the youth's appreciation of local traditional forms. During this period, AFM members continued to practice their repertoire, write new songs, and perform throughout different neighborhoods of Libertad.

Although this local social labor does not help a project to gain success in the commercial popular music industry, it does build a solid base for cultural recovery projects such as folklorization, which can be a useful start in generating awareness about local cultural traditions. Ralam's current job in Libertad, which he has held since September 2016, extends beyond his work with AFM. He is facilitator of a folkloric music and dance group for the Ministry of Culture's Expedición Sensorial program (during its first and second years) that is managed by Corporación Cabildo. Many members of AFM are part of this dance group, but the AFM project is clearly separate and has different goals than folkloric dance groups, such as empowering young people through music making, writing, and creativity while honoring local elders, their practices, and their territory. Nonetheless, AFM members also learn from the Expedición Sensorial program, as it provides intensified practice time for them. Corporación Cabildo's approach, though, follows a approach characteristic of folklorization projects, perpetuating technically developed but reified notions and representations of cultural traditions, objectified and standardized for the sake of curriculum and teaching. While AFM's work may have facilitated the success of Expedición Sensorial in Libertad, the Ministry of Culture, through Corporación Cabildo, reinserts into the project hegemonic and standardized notions of folklore, bullerengue, and gaita musics that are not necessarily in direct dialogue with local processes of construction of tradition or that do not acknowledge specific local styles and repertoires.

AFM is developing a community rehabilitation program through local musical practices while, also from a culturalist paradigm, the Expedición Sensorial focuses on a more "folkloric" approach to cultural expressions that aims at creating dance groups to represent tradition as cultural performance. Even further removed from communal collective reparation goals, though, was the initiative of inserting AFM's work in the music industry market place. This practice had some advantages; for instance, AFM benefitted from the Victims Unit multimedia team's production of the song and video of "Bullenrap." However, AFM's participation in the CCM 2015 in Cartagena was driven by a conscious attempt to transform the internal logic of the AFM project in a clichéd scenario, where musical producers try to seduce emerging stars with promises of career in the show business. At the same time, though, because these producers worked for state institutions concerned with victims' needs, and because they also undertook actions to strengthen AFM locally, their participation in CCM as a reparation measure was still conducted from a developmentalist logic that privileged an idea of success in which artists tour, sell records, and work outside of the local contexts of their village, neighborhood, family, and immediate community.

Ralam was concerned about decisions he felt pressured to make related to AFM and the potential tensions between two aspirations: his dream of hundreds of young people united through communal music making, and his dream of being a successful artist in show business. His concerns were founded on his fear that the two goals would contradict each other. This tension is exemplified in his plan for enlarging the membership of AFM to spread it throughout the region, while Rolo and Simón were outspoken in their desires to make the group smaller to facilitate touring. This is one example of how market needs and

dynamics do not enhance this kind of project unless they also clearly attend specific and previously identified local needs. I see this incursion in the market as potentially threatening if there is not awareness, reflection, and action from involved parties to differentiate between local needs and market needs and between the culturalist and developmentalist paradigms. Addressing local needs through a developmentalist approach—from an outside and top-down perspective—can potentially disempower local actors, perpetuate hegemonic aesthetics and practices, disrupt local processes, and fail to draw upon the transformative potential of local social movements and their particularities.

This tension between local and external needs is often caused by lack of awareness on the part of program officials, who are not necessarily trained in sociology, anthropology, ethnography, and other disciplines that focus on intercultural relations and on the diversity of perspectives on the uses of music practices and other cultural expressions within society. Eurocentric, capitalistic, and nationalistic biases remain in Colombian public policy and program implementation, as illustrated in the ways they consider music and the arts as part of the "fine arts" (such as classical and academic "art" musics), as "popular music" meant to thrive in the culture industries, or as "national folklore" understood as reified cultural performances meant to represent regional cultures on a national or international stage. Even in the case of Libertad's Collective Reparation Plan, a program developed through long and complex processes of participation and negotiation, the implementation of reparation actions related to local musics are still influenced and permeated by these hegemonic ideas.

A change of paradigm is necessary in the institutional circles that create policies and programs about music, particularly a change to the paradigm that acknowleges music

as a potentially powerful social practice in contemporary areas of social development and in the processes of peacebuilding and conflict transformation, now and in the future. The multicultural realities of Colombia require special care in the analyses of social practices that can provide knowledge on social and cultural strategies to mitigate conflict in culturally specific contexts.

CHAPTER 6

LIBERTEÑO *CULTURE AND COLLECTIVE REPARATION: HISTORICAL AND SOCIOCULTURAL FOUNDATIONS FOR RESILIENCE AND EMPATHY*

Liberteño cultural expressions have worked as means to enhance the government-funded Collective Reparation Plan geared towards aiding this Afro-Colombian community, which was a victim of the armed conflict on Colombia's northern coast. In previous chapters I have analyzed the ways people have used local musics and cultural practices to generate communal cohesion and address social issues in this Afro-Colombian town. I have argued that these positive changes are made possible due to four conditions:

1. The local history of Afro-Colombian cultural expressions rooted within society as traditions, along with the use of such traditions as strategies for community solidarity and resistance to oppression;

2. The multi-level social capital of local artists and cultural leaders that makes it possible for them to engage directly with a diverse range of stakeholders;

3. The creativity of these artists and cultural leaders in using local cultural resources to advance their political and social agendas; and

4. The complex and problematic, but sometimes participatory, structure of institutional programs.

This set of conditions grows from diverse social phenomena that include the histories of Afro-Colombian people in the Caribbean; their specific ethnic and cultural beliefs, practices, and traditions; the agencies, agendas, and collective action initiatives of local stakeholders; and the current state of national policies and programs related to music and post-conflict rebuilding. These circumstances have allowed local musical expressions to contribute to post-conflict rehabilitation initiatives following the logic of local musicians

and other local actors. The projects and achievements of AFM and Chabelo serve as useful examples of the ways these conditions have facilitated the ability for cultural expressions to make positive social and cultural impacts in Libertad.

In this chapter, I argue that these four conditions also operate in other social contexts in Libertad, contexts that go beyond specific CRP projects focused particularly on music. Local musics and other expressive cultural practices have played important roles in relieving emotional tension as part of other CRP activities, generating social integration, and creating spaces for the resignification of traumatic experiences. While AFM is a music-centered project, other local organizations and collective-action associations with different foci—such as judicial projects and health programs—have also adopted artistic expressions as a means of creating empathy, shared meanings, and resilience among community members. Ultimately, beyond the strength associated with the constructive and strategic uses of these cultural expressions, their expressive and poetic power generates empathy, emotional connections, openness, and resilience, thus enabling transformations in interpersonal relationships that positively affect the local social fabric.

One such example is the revival of funerary-wake song-games that serve as means to empower a victims' collective of nine women who are important community leaders in Libertad. This cultural practice, which I will discuss below, has strengthened their sense of identity as they have worked to re-signify the traumatic experiences they suffered during the paramilitary occupation and to sensitize fellow community members to the pain suffered by victims of sexual abuse more generally.

Sexual abuse and rape were frequent crimes committed by the paramilitaries during their occupation of Libertad. When El Oso, the paramilitary leader who controlled

Libertad, was sentenced to jail, he never confessed the many sexual crimes charged to him. A group of nine local women leaders, victims of his abuses, organized to press charges and get him expelled from the transitional Justice and Peace program because he had not told the whole truth about his crimes (one of the conditions to get reduced sentences in this program). This process was risky and stressful for these fierce leaders, who, as I describe further in this chapter, used funerary-wake song-games and other local cultural expressions as mechanisms to build social capital and empathy, and to keep the group united through this dangerous judicial process.

Utilizing traditional expressive materials—such as "La marucha," a well-known funerary song-game that contains sexually allusive lyrics—the nine women built strong cooperative relations among themselves. These women established enough social capital and empathy within their group, as well as with other community members and outside collaborators, that they not only sensitized other community members to issues of sexual absue but also managed to keep the town's most feared criminal behind bars. Although such practices were only a small part of the complex processes and procedures involved in taking effective judicial action against El Oso, these expressive practices helped the women construct a local, grassroots, and empathy-based process that provided a support base to keep group members safe, united, and empowered while sustaining the women through long legal battles.

I cite this case to exemplify how practices based on local, traditional cultural expressions, when contextualized in appropriate social conditions such as the ones described previously, can further arts-based peacebuilding programs and create conditions for the both strengthening of local culture generally and the multiplication of expressive

practices. In the case of these nine women, their use of traditional cultural expressions was intentionally oriented towards peacebuilding efforts. Through processes of cultural revival in Libertad, cultural practices—including traditional musics and dances, funerary-wake rituals, games, other oral expressions, local celebrations, and traditional medicine—have become mechanisms for community members to utilize as cultural resources to address diverse problems within their society. That is the case of the nine leaders and their strategy of using music and the performance of funerary-wake song-games to begin to alleviate their trauma and work toward conflict transformation. The creativity of local stakeholders in this situation involves transplanting cultural resources from their previous social contexts and transforming their functions to serve their agenda. The funerary-wake game "La Marucha" became an expressive means to transform and transcend the experience of violence. The resilience of local stakeholders in using their cultural practices to generate empathy is a key aspect that contributes to the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts.

Local Leaders and Local Culture: The Construction of Local Identities

Post-conflict local cultural practices in Libertad also help to create and articulate ideas of local identity. Today, it has become a common practice to either mention Libertad explicitly or to refer to it in song lyrics, speeches, scripts of theater pieces, as well as in other forms of oral expression such as *décimas* and *verseo* (verse improvisations in a structure of octosyllabic quartets with ABAB or ABBA rhyme). These references to the town seem to be a recent inclusion, however. When comparing older traditional material and the current compositions of Chabelo and AFM, it is noticeable that the latter use this resource as a frequent trope in their work. The word Libertad appears more often in newly created expressive works, such as AFM's song lyrics, Chabelo's bullerengue compositions,

the dramas they write, and so on. Older materials, such as traditional wake games and older bullerengue songs do not include such placenames, despite being local forms that often tell stories about everyday life.

This change in the subject and expressive content of local performance texts to favor newly constructed representations of local identities is directly related to the cultural revival agendas of activist groups in Libertad. Cultural revival with the larger aim of peacebuilding has been a common thread throughout this dissertation. In the psychosocial rehabilitation approach that is fundamental to Colombian collective reparation initiatives, a strong sense of belonging for the territory and members of the community—a sense of local identity—is encouraged to generate stability, coping mechanisms, empathy, and resilience that, together, work to transform the meanings of experiences of victimization and suffering into positive and constructive attitudes and behaviors (Victims Unit 2012). When cultural-revival initiatives emerged as part of the CRP, explicitly mentioning Libertad within expressive genres became a direct form of addressing issues such as the loss of cultural traditions and the need to make them stronger again. In a way, the people that identify with Chabelo's and AFM's work are embracing newly articulated forms of local identities based on recently constructed notions of "local culture." This assertion is not meant to claim that there was no local culture in Libertad before the revival but, rather, that the notion of "local culture"—as something specific, unique, and characteristic of the Liberteño folk—is a new construction that emerged partially in the context of an institutional peacebuilding process.

Isabel Martínez, or "Chabelo," for example, has written several songs in the last fifteen years that explicitly mention Libertad. Many of her improvised verses during

bullerengue practices and performances also include the word Libertad. Her song "Bullerengue mamá," for example, which AFM used to create the refrain for the song "Bullenrap" (see Chapter Four), goes as follows:

Ay bullerengue, mamá	Aye, bullerengue, momma
Bullerengue pa' gozá	Bullerengue to enjoy
Bullerengue fue nacido	Bullerengue was born
En el pueblo 'e Libertad	In the town of Libertad

Another example of this practice can be seen in the lyrics to the song "Soy una pobre campesina" ("I am a Poor Farmer"), written by Chabelo in a *merengue* vallenato style. This instance of the song was recorded in January 2014 in Libertad, during the folkloric festival organized by the Victims Unit and the NGO Origen Circular:

Ya mi brazo a mí me duele	My arm already hurts
Ay de tanto trabajar	From so much work
Y digo que no me duele	I say, what does not hurt
La mente para cantar	Is my mind for song
Cuando la mente se cansé	When the mind gets tired
Aquí me quedo sentada	Here I will be sitting
Aquí me quedo sentada	Here I will be sitting
En el pueblo de Libertad	In the town of Libertad

The members of AFM also mention Libertad in their songs, interspersing explicit messages about the importance of local culture and cultural identity. In AFM's case, the goal is to portray Libertad as a place with a history of poverty and violence, but also as a community with strong local culture and hope for a better future. Their lyrics discuss the situation in Libertad in explicit terms, aiming at generating reflexivity and awareness about local issues. Here is an excerpt from the song "Por las lágrimas" ("By the Tears"), from AFM's hip-hop repertoire:

Quiero cantar	I want to sing
Y dedicarles mi canción	And dedicate my song to you
Hermano que me escuchas	Brother that is listening
Te hablo con el corazón	From the heart, I'm speaking
Soy un campesino humilde	I'm a humble farmer
Con sueños y aspiración	With dreams and aspirations
Le doy gracias a mi pueblo	I thank my *pueblo* (people, town)
Porque son mi inspiración	Because they are my inspiration
No fue un error	It wasn't a mistake
Tampoco fue coincidencia	Neither was it coincidence
Yo soy liberteño	I am Liberteño
Esa es mi esencia	That is my essence

This use of song lyrics directed at strengthening local identities is a core element embedded within cultural revival efforts in the local collective reparation process. Throughout all my stays in Libertad, I witnessed community leaders treating culture as an important local resource. They saw culture as a social asset in part because of its "local" character and because it was seen as a core tool for identity building. Media discussion of the impacts of AFM's music project tends to highlight issues of cultural identity. The construction of local identities, nonetheless, is also a consequence of larger social and historical processes, processes that also have enabled local music practices in Libertad to affect local processes of communal rehabilitation more broadly.

In the next section, I explain how the four conditions I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter have facilitated frameworks for the generation of empathy and resilience in Libertad and have contributed to their transformative power in the context of the local CRP. The four conditions are 1) a local history of communal integration through local cultural practices, 2) sufficient levels of social capital among local cultural leaders, 3) the creative resilience of local artists, and 4) the effective use of the opportunities for participation sometimes present in the environment of institutional programs. Ultimately, I

argue that generating spaces where empathy and resilience can thrive is key to transforming the quality of human interactions, which necessarily affects larger processes of social transformation.

Empathy and Resilience in Peacebuilding and Reconciliation: The Case of Libertad

While doing ethnographic research in Libertad, it became clear to me that the efficiency of local cultural practices for generating social cohesion was directly related to their capacity to generate frameworks that facilitate empathy, a common ground, mutual trust, resilience, and creativity. Even though people in Libertad do not use the words "empathy" (*empatía*) and "resilience" (*resiliencia*), these ideas are fundamental in the fields of peacebuilding and in psychosocial rehabilitation approaches that have influenced policy documents and program methodologies in Colombia (Galtung 2000, Urbain 2015, Lawrence 2015, Victims Unit 2012). Discussing the idea of "empathy while musicking," Felicity Lawrence argues that

> While retaining fully the sense of our own distinct consciousness, [we] enter actively and imaginatively into others' inner states to understand how they experience their world and how they are feeling, reaching out to what we perceive as similar while accepting difference, and experiencing upon reflection of our own resulting feelings, appropriate to our situation as empathic observer, which may be virtually the same feelings or different but sympathetic to theirs, within a context in which we care to respect and acknowledge their human dignity and our shared humanity. (Lawrence 2008: 24)

This idea of feeling someone else's feelings as core to change, adaptation, and resilience is central within many peacebuilding programs and in the related scholarly literature that addresses music (Galtung 2000, Cohen 2005: 32-36, Cunningham 2008: 117-119; cf. Dunn 2008). In her article about "asset-based approaches" to social change, for instance, Jeni Burnell argues that cultural action can be used as means to identify and unlock local assets and resources, which can enable long-term resilience in communities.

Understanding the fluid and creative nature of cultural expressions, Burnell argues that, through collective artistic practices based on local talent and its locally decisive nature, these practices can awaken previously unidentified local assets (Burnell 2012). These new assets, in turn, can strengthen the processes of resilience—which Burnell understands as "a person's capacity to survive, adapt and bounce back"—in a local social group (Burnell 2012: 135).

In Chapter Two I presented a brief historical review of Afro-Colombian Caribbean culture, the social roles of some of its expressive practices, and how the armed conflict transformed local culture and weakened the social fabric by generating distrust and atomization. Exploring this case from a historical perspective helped me to see how the transformative and integrative roles played by African-descendent expressive cultures in the Americas have sometimes enabled local processes of social organization and, thus, facilitated emancipation and other forms of constructive social change. In the case of Libertad, I have shown how traditional expressive practices during funerary-wake rituals are historically shaped actions that are fundamental for revalidating relationships of cooperation and solidarity today. I argue that the power funerary-wake games exhibit for generating empathy is what makes them a special and powerful practice for transforming interpersonal relationships and creating social bonds. These practices have assisted people in challenging social conditions, including the death of a community member. Local cultural leaders became aware of this situation and struggled to perpetuate these practices, even after receiving threats for doing so, and thereby acknowledged the power of their collective actions and their larger importance for the community.

A discussion based on the levels of cooperation and trust among the local leaders was one main point of Chapter 3. I analyzed the critical social situation of post-occupation Libertad, the recent development of institutional programs oriented towards the collective reparation of the community, and the role that local cultural leaders played in the reparation program. Through an exploration of the tensions within the local leadership, I identified specific strategies that Chabelo and the members of AFM used to gain trust and influence within the local governance systems related to the CRP. These strategies of adaptation and change pushed forward the implementation of programs related to traditional cultural practices—programs that had been outlined on paper but had not yet been implemented locally—as well as the development of new cultural practices such as bullenrap with objectives aligned with Measure 3 of the local CRP. AFM's commitment to local cultural revival work and music teaching initiatives for local children generated resonances, identification, and empathy with the older leaders who started seeing this group as a legitimate and officially recognized entity by the local Comité de Impulso (Impulse Committee) and the Victims Unit. The members of this music collective worked hard to amass a critical amount of multilevel social capital, cultivating relationships with state officials and NGOs at several levels. However, it was AFM's concrete actions towards relieving intergenerational tensions and recovering local culture, among others, that generated sufficient common ground between the groups of community organizers and leaders, helping them understand that AFM worked towards the same goal. Thus, they transcended pragmatic differences. Such actions generated empathy among two seemingly separate and contested social groupsand created spaces for mutual benefit and collaboration.

The creative resilience of local artists, which involves the strategic and careful use of local cultural resources to advance specific social and political agendas, is another one of the four conditions I identified as key for enabling the positive social impact of local musical and cultural practices in Libertad. In Chapter 4, I analyzed how the members of AFM constructed the bullenrap collective musical practice—a fusion of musical sounds and practices from local traditional musics and hip-hop—to directly address issues of empathy, resilience, and cultural revival in the community through their lyrics and inclusive practices (Mattern 1998). They created expressive practices designed to touch on several sensitive social issues, including tension between specific generational cohorts, the revival of traditional cultural practices, and the transformation of such traditional materials, to create new musical forms that resonate with large segments of current Libertad's demography. I also examined the process of resilience and transformation undertaken by AFM and Chabelo during situations in which I was an active collaborator. The work we did to strengthen AFM demonstrated the ability of these young leaders to adapt themselves to a diverse range of situations and to benefit from them, such as having a *Cachaco* (person from Bogotá) simultaneously conducting research on their work and teaching them traditional Afro-Colombian drumming.

Chapters 2 through 4 discussed local musicians and music practices for post-conflict and peacebuilding in Libertad. The mechanisms I have described in these chapters address the affective power of local musical expressions for generating common ground among community members. In all cases, adaptability, creativity, and resilience proved to be key assets for cultural leaders engaged in arts-based community building initiatives. Chapter 5, on the other hand, explored music and peacebuilding in relation to interactions

between grassroots and institutional music programs in Libertad. In that chapter I analyzed the theoretical frameworks and assumptions underlying music and peacebuilding programs and policy in Colombia, exploring an ethnographic case in which opposing logics and assumptions about music, i.e. developmentalist and culturalist perspectives, clashed. The clash between the music ideologies of Victims Unit music producers and AFM's leaders represents a more pervasive issue in the perceptions of music in Colombia. Music in the context of institutional programs has tended to be seen as related to the so-called "art music" sphere, as linked to the mainstream pop music industry, or as part of the reified realm of cultural representations produced by people following earlier folkloric paradigms developed since the 1940s in Colombia. Through this analysis, I concluded that, when institutional programs for music and peacebuilding embrace more open and participatory approaches, accounting for local logics and needs while embracing horizontal dialogue practices, they tend to be more focused and efficient, making it easier to generate a concrete impact and spark social change. The idea of participatory institutional programs as enabling conflict transformation through music is one of the four cases I analyze in this chapter as conditions that allow music to be effective in peacebuilding. However, this one condition, explored more thoroughly in Chapter 5, is different from the ones already discussed in this section. While the deep drive of the participatory programs process is political, the other situations three I analyze are based on affect.

In this section I have shown how, ultimately, the mechanisms that have enabled expressive practices in Libertad to play a determining role in the local processes of collective reparation are largely based on empathy, connection, and the ability of community members to recognize each other as peers with shared needs and interests, from

an affective point of view and from the perspective of awareness and cognitive reflexivity. In the next section I will discuss in more detail another case—different from AFM and Chabelo—in which local expressive and musical practices played a role in generating empathy, unity, resilience, and empowerment among a local group of female leaders whose agenda was not directly related to the recovery of local cultural practices. With this case, I aim to demonstrate how pervasive and important local cultural expressions can become in the context of community development and collective reparation programs more generally.

Funerary-Wake Song-Games, Transitional Justice, and the Empowerment of Female Leaders

One of the most brutal actions of the paramilitaries during their occupation of Libertad was the frequent rape of local women. Victims claim that the paramilitaries sexually abused hundreds of girls and women in town throughout their eight-year stay. In 2004, when the police caught El Oso, who had been the de facto ruler of Libertad, he submitted to the Justice and Peace Law transitional justice program. This program offered concessions to members of paramilitaries who told the truth about their crimes, including concessions such as a maximum prison sentence of eight years. However, El Oso—who victimized around fifty local girls and women, according to some community leaders—did not publicly confess his sexual crimes against Liberteño women in court (NCRR 2011). When nine of these women organized—and risked their lives—to press charges against El Oso, a tough judicial process began. The aim of this group of women was to remove El Oso from the Justice and Peace program so that he would be tried within the regular justice system. Their efforts were successful, and he is currently serving a forty-year sentence in jail. The efforts of these nine women achieved heroic results for the community because

they guaranteed that El Oso would remain behind bars. One of the worst fears of Liberteño people was the he would regain his freedom and return to town. These nine women conducted fearless, precise, and concrete actions to prevent this from happening.

In the 2011 report *Women and War: Victims and Resistance in the Colombian Caribbean*,[44] researchers from the Grupo de Memoria Histórica (Historical Memory Group) at the Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación (National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation, or NCRR) documented the pervasiveness of sexual violence in this region of Colombia (NCRR 2011). Between 1997 and 2005, the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia) advanced into the region, aiming to taking the territory from the leftist guerrillas who had been influential in the region for at least twenty years. Thousands of civilians suffered during this long conflict. Soon it became clear that the paramilitaries not only wanted to expel the guerrillas, but also wanted absolute control of some of the areas in which they operated. In some cases, as in San Onofre, the paramilitaries worked to create a new social order according to their values of oppression, violence, discrimination, and pillage, where "representations of masculinity and femininity had a constitutive role, even if not in a premeditated way" (NCRR 2011: 29).

In the "systematization report" (*informe de sistematización*) that led to the consolidation of Libertad's CRP, the NCRR summarized the situation in town as follows:

> The leader of the paramilitary group that took over Libertad was identified as alias El Oso [The Bear], born in the Córdoba Department and part of paramilitary alias Cadena's [Chain] group. He and approximately twenty other men established themselves in Libertad for seven years. After his arrival, through his relationship with Libertad native La Paraca (The Paramilitary Woman), he started demanding the first illegal tributes and charging fines to locals for getting involved in fights

[44] Original Spanish title: *Mujeres y Guerra. Víctimas y Resistentes en el Caribe Colombiano*.

> and conflicts; he forced labor on people that did not have the resources to pay these illegal fines and taxes; and he began stealing property from local residents, as well as conducting public beatings and punishments, and other humiliating treatments. (NCRR 2012: 82)

In this context of violence and aggression, women in Libertad were subjected to diverse forms of humiliation and abusive treatment. Several institutional reports claim local women to be the demographic most affected by El Oso, who not only imposed strict control and punishments on them, but also raped them (NCRR 2011: 101). Some of these punishments were public and some were conducted in private settings. The main square in Libertad, for example, is marked by the history of punishments inflicted upon local women. Women were frequently forced to sweep the main square while wearing signs that told the community why they were being punished. The most common reasons for women to be punished were allegations that they were being *chismosa* (gossipy), unfaithful to their husbands, fighting with their spouse or other women, or simply being too transgressive. One case documented by the NCRR describes how a woman was publicly whipped by El Oso for her "infidelity" on December 31, 2002 (NCRR 2011: 102). She left town and never returned.

Women that El Oso desired or that he wanted to punish more severely were taken to a place called Alto de Julio, which was close to town. He kept the women there from one to several days, with the excuse of disciplining them by making them work at his house. While there, he forced them to have sexual relationships with him. Women often were physically hurt, beaten up, and humiliated if they refused to comply with his demands. Reports compiled by government institutions show that El Oso's men also sexually abused and raped hundreds of women. However, the most shocking action by El Oso is remembered as a perverse mix of festivity and sorrow: a four-day-long beauty

pageant organized by him in the town and beaches of Libertad during Holy Week 2003, with seventeen local participants between ages thirteen and seventeen (NCRR 2011: 62).

El Oso mobilized resources from the entire community to put on this event, forcing people to accommodate guests in their houses, cook for tourists, and be the event's workers and collaborators. He also required people from every neighborhood in Libertad and the surrounding villages to contribute one candidate to the pageant. Beauty pageants are a form of entertainment rooted in Colombian Caribbean popular culture.[45] They are put on as big celebrations in which community members (from a neighborhood, town, city, department, or even a nation) root for one of their own people to win against other candidates in a beauty and talent show. Holy Week is also a special moment of celebration in Libertad, as briefly explained in Chapters 1 and 3. This holiday is marked by special ritual behavior involving religious practices, gastronomy, and local card games. Holy Week is considered a moment of generosity and abundance, when community members prepare unusual amounts of special seasonal foods to share with people in the community. El Oso's beauty pageant was unusually large for the size of the town, and it included performances by national vallenato artist Farid Ortiz and champeta star Papo Man, as well as three famous picó sound systems from Cartagena (NCRR 2011: 65).

During the four days of this event, participants had to engage in many activities to earn points towards winning the contest. During the process, El Oso required a one-on-one interview with each one of the candidates, without their parents, guardians, or anyone else. During this forced encounter, El Oso would make sexual requests. It is said that candidates

[45] This practice has been partially shaped by national events, and the Concurso Nacional de la Belleza Señorita Colombia (Miss Colombia National Beauty Contest—the largest beauty national pageant) has been traditionally held in the city of Cartagena, a place considered a cultural reference for Liberteño people.

who refused to comply with his demands had to leave their communities to save their lives. Data collected by the NCRR indicates that El Oso sexually abused at least three candidates during those encounters, and that after the event he would pick up another one of the girls at late hours for several weeks. However, some community members believe all seventeen girls were abused and that there is a "pact of silence" about it. El Oso was a persistent sex offender in this community, and girls and women were the population most affected by his atrocious behavior.

Patriarchal Hegemonies and Judicial Battles: Re-Victimization of Local Women and the Resistance of Nine Female Leaders

El Oso was caught in 2004 near San Onofre. Aware of his warrant, he was trying to escape the region dressed as a farmer. He nearly went unnoticed when crossing a police checkpoint, except a young boy got visibly scared when he saw him. When the police asked the boy why he was so scared, he pointed to the man, identifying him as El Oso. After arrest, El Oso submitted to the Justicia y Paz (Justice and Peace) transitional justice program, a special jurisdiction created through the Justice and Peace Law (Law 975/2005) supposedly to address the demobilization of paramilitary armies, the reconstruction of historical memory related to war crimes, and the reparation of victims of the armed conflict. Demobilized paramilitaries benefitted from reduced prison sentences if they confessed all their crimes. El Oso confessed to many of the atrocities he committed in Libertad, including the massacres and murders, his tyrannical authoritarianism, extortions, theft, and coercion, as well as the mental and physical abuse of local population. However, he never admitted to committing sexual crimes, despite being questioned about it. Women in Libertad were afraid to press charges, because they knew that the consequences could be lethal. Other paramilitaries who raped and abused women have been convicted for those

crimes, but not El Oso. Although he detailed many of his criminal endeavors in San Onofre and Libertad in meetings with prosecutors and victims, he still refused to acknowledge what he did to women and girls in Libertad (Revista Semana 2014, El Tiempo 2015, Montaño 2015, Guerrero 2015).

Given a long regional history of patriarchal social structure, the systematic abuses of local women had largely been ignored or, even worse, justified by other, mostly male, community members and leaders. Thus, the struggles of getting such abuses publicly recognized as crimes and of giving women their right to reparation were particularly difficult. This situation was a heavy burden for Liberteño women in 2007, when the NGO Iniciativa de Mujeres Colombianas por la Paz (Colombian Women's Initiative for Peace, or WIP, if following its translated Spanish acronym, IMP) arrived in the community. WIP members were there to develop psychosocial and judicial programs for local women who suffered sexual violence during the occupation. Given the patriarchal societal bias common in this kind of framework, sexual crimes were repeatedly neglected, diminished, denied, or even excused by some male community members, including local leaders. As documented by the NCRR in their 2012 report about women and collective reparation in Colombia:

> It was said [in the community] that some women had intentionally established erotic-affective relationships with the armed actors, looking to obtain economic and social benefits, such as the *prestige* that these relationships granted them. It seems like some teenagers and young women felt attracted by the economic possibilities of having a relationship with the armed actors and others were pressured by their families to engage in such relationships. The social recognition of being somehow *privileged* over other women meant that the families accepted such relationships as a form of protection from eventual violent actions. (NCRR 2012: 82, emphasis in the original)

Such perceptions and the dismissal of the abuse they suffered further victimized the women of Libertad. In 2008 a local nurse, Adriana Porras, met with the members of WIP

to discuss strategies for sensitizing both the local population and the institutions about the realities of the trauma and suffering caused by sexual assault in this community. A related but more pressing issue was that local women were terrified by the prospect of El Oso being set free in only eight years. They worred that he would return to Libertad to continue his reign of terror and oppression. Eventually, this work with WIP led to the organization of a local group led by with nine women who had been sexually assaulted by El Oso. Under the leadership of Adriana Porras and the legal counsel of WIP, these nine women decided to press charges against El Oso for sexual abuse, aiming at getting him expelled from the Justice and Peace program for lying about his crimes.

The Nine Women, Adriana Porras, and the Women's Initiative for Peace: Local Sensitization and the Judicial Battle

The nine Liberteño women met with workers from the Bogotá-based NGO WIP to address unresolved issues related to sexual abuse. For seven years, the alliance between these local women and WIP worked to address the neglect in the judicial system that did not prosecute El Oso for sexual crimes in Libertad, despite strong evidence. Even though some community members claimed that he abused more than fifty women locally, it was these nine mothers and leaders who were determined to follow through the judicial process against him. They became known *las nueve mujeres* (the nine women). Two local leaders joined with them to provide visible muscle to support their action. These included Libertad's nurse Adriana Porras, who served as main interlocutor between the nine women and diverse institutions (governmental, NGOs and INGOs), and Chabelo, who worked with Adriana Porras going door-to-door to encourage local women to participate.

It was difficult at first for local leaders to acknowledge the leadership of these women. A long history of patriarchy, exacerbated by the "normalized" abuses perpetrated

by the paramilitary for many years, led to a skewed perception of the abuses committed against women. Many of the leaders participating in the CRP were skeptical about recognizing this dimension of the damages caused to the local female population. Some of them considered the abuses to be instead consented actions, others denied that such actions ever occurred, and some even expressed relative indifference because they did not consider sexual abuse towards women to be a crime comparable to the other types of damages suffered by the community (NCRR 2012: 76-81, Montaño 2015). Therefore, the nine women had to endure and follow through a tough process of sensitization of the local leadership through their participation in CRP activities, since their judicial struggle was acknowledged as part of the CRP by the Victims Unit.

The nine women gained further support from the community in 2013 and 2014, when the people realized that El Oso could regain his freedom in 2015. The implementation of the CRP was behind schedule, and Libertad was still a vulnerable community. All the stakeholders were worried that the community could face renewed violence. The nine women, however, knew that the solution was in their hands. They had been strengthening their organization for the last five years, and, along with the other individuals and organizations that collaborated with them, they followed through the judicial process to defend women's rights in court. The women were threatened in many ways, and many times the army and the police had to escort them to the hearings.

Despite the hard facts, not everyone in Libertad supported the nine women. Some people thought they would achieve nothing beyond angering El Oso, thus exposing the entire community to retaliation. Despite many moments of hardship, the women encouraged each other and continued to move forward to achieve their objective. They

were dealing with threats and intimidation from the paramilitaries, as well as critiques and marginalization from fellow community members. Furthermore, they had to face El Oso at the hearings. It is easy to visualize many ways in which these nine poor Afro-Colombian women from a distant rural district in Caribbean Colombia could have given up. But they did not; they pursued. And music played an important role in how these nine women empowered each other during difficult times of trauma and stress.

Traditional Funerary-Wake Song-Games and Women's Empowerment: Overcoming Fear

On March 4, 2015, the Supreme Court passed a judgment (*sentencia*) that made history for the victims of the Colombian internal armed conflict, especially for victims of sexual violence: El Oso would be expelled from the Justice and Peace transitional justice system because he did not confess the sexual crimes he committed against the nine Liberteño women. The Supreme Court confirmed a decision by the Supreme Tribunal of Barranquilla, which the defense had appealed (Guerrero 2015). According to lawyer and activist Patricia Guerrero, "What we have here is a group of fearless surviving victims determined to have justice done; a group of fearless human rights defenders, determined to seek justice in the court," as well as the collaboration of national and international women rights activists and Colombian organization WIP (Guerrero 2015). The case is now renowned and internationally referenced in transitional-justice laws related to sexual war crimes. However, mustering the courage necessary to persist and follow through on such an enterprise was a considerable challenge for these women. They felt threatened, scared, alone, and unprotected most of the time.

Music and the traditional games, however, helped to keep the group together, facilitating moments of empathy and connection between them. According to Camilo

Conde,[46] these practices generated mutual support and strengthened their union, making it easier for them to endure hardship. Throughout the process against El Oso, WIP facilitated workshops intended to provide social and emotional relief in the group. These stress-management activities became especially important during particularly tense moments in the process, such as when the number of threats increased or during the build-up to a hearing with El Oso. There were at least four occasions between 2008 and 2015 when these workshops had to be conducted to enable the continuity of the process and to support women who, at times, justifiably felt like giving up. During the first workshop, they worked together to create rag dolls, a traditional activity in an area where mothers and children made their own toys. After the second workshop, the nine women decided to perform cultural practices such as music and funerary-wake games as strategies for emotional discharge and to keep the group strong.

For example, the group had to travel to Sincelejo many times for hearings with El Oso. During their stays at the hotel, they all gathered in one room to play and sing along to loud vallenato and champeta music from a boom-box they had brought from home. Ángela Cerón from WIP explained to me that the hotel management often complained to her because the women were dancing and singing loudly in their rooms. The group also started travelling to other parts of Colombia to participate in events sponsored by the Victims Unit to talk about their case. During these events, they always performed the funerary-wake games. And the game that always cheered up the crowd was "La marucha." As recounted by Camilo Conde, when they spoke to other victims during a Victims Unit event in Bogotá, after performing "La marucha," the people expressed envy for their happiness,

[46] Bogotá-based artist Camilo Conde specializes in arts for peacebuilding and has accompanied the nine women on several occasions during the process throughout the years. He and I produced AFM's "A pie pelao" video, as explained in Chapter 4.

resilience, and ability to utilize their own cultural tools to manage pain and trauma. They used other expressive forms to alleviate stress, as well. During a workshop with WIP before their first hearing in 2008, a picture from El Oso was attached to a dummy, and it was suggested that the women say to the dummy all the things they planned to say to El Oso at the hearing. During each of their turns, the woman performed complex and emotional monologues, talking, yelling, and crying at the doll—as well as kicking it and beating it up at times, expressing their anger, pain, and frustration. After this deeply engaged performance, the women felt more calm and focused, ready to face their victimizer the following day.

Another example that demonstrates the rootedness of the wake-games practice among the nine women is their participation during an event that commemorated Ten Years of Resistance in June 2014. This event was organized by the Victims Unit in partnership with local organizations, the Department of Sucre, the municipality of San Onofre, and most of the NGOs that worked in Libertad at the time. For this event, artist Camilo Conde brought a human-sized cement replica of the statue of Liberty (*Estatua de la Libertad*) to develop a community-arts project oriented towards peacebuilding.[47] The

[47] The story of this statue is interesting because it is entangled with a former reparation initiative from the Colombian government in the context of the peace accord with the Ejército Popular de Liberación (EPL [Popular Liberation Army]) guerrilla group in the early 1990s. At that time, there was no national policy on collective reparations. Therefore, the government planned collectively with the demobilized group to provide them with goods confiscated from drug lords so they could use them to compensate their victims, as well as themselves, for acts of state-terrorism against them. Among the many goods given to EPL, this Statue of Liberty was given to a former commander, who stored it in his house. Later, artist Camilo Conde participated in a project with this former combatant, who offered the statue to Camilo, saying he did not know what to do with it. Camilo stored it in his place near Bogotá for years. After he got involved with the Libertad community and the nine women's judicial initiative, Camilo asked them if they would be interested in having the statue brought to the town, and they agreed. Then, in 2014, Camilo and other collaborators put the human-sized Liberty on a jeep and drove from Bogotá to Libertad to develop a participatory community arts project that used the statue as a symbol to represent and resignify the history of violence against women in town. Community members painted and adorned the

process was open to the entire community. However, only the nine women engaged in it, and they did so immediately. As soon as they saw the statue, they started singing and dancing "La marucha." It is as if they had quickly identified with the womanhood of the Liberty and were singing and dancing in celebration of that gift to the community, utilizing the wake-games to create a performative space for joy and communion. In fact, as part of the celebration the following day, the nine women performed a theater piece they had prepared. In that piece they enacted their stories of violence, as well as the process of collective action that led to the lawsuit against El Oso. In this instance, too, the script included the performance of "La marucha" and other funerary-wake song-games.

This repeated appropriation of "La marucha" in the context of sexual assault victims is something that caught my attention. The lyrics from "La marucha" are sexually overt, as described in Chapter 2, explicitly mentioning interactions between the genitalia of men and women in local slang and through metaphor. In the lyrics, the vagina asks for, or is given, some tool or element that, in the latter part of the verse, is used against or on the penis. There are different possible explanations of why this group of women embraced the song. For example, the women may be reinterpreting through song the abuse they suffered, and, in an exercise of reflection and symbolic action, they may be taking revenge by abusing the penis (symbolizing their perpetrator) with the "tools." Another explanation is that the nine women play the games and embrace the practice as a sign of the recovery of innocence in the experience of sexuality, as well as the transcendence of their traumatic experience into a more constructive and proactive flow of daily life.

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statue using several techniques (mosaic, embedding, and others), and it now sits in the main square of Libertad. Camilo is now in the process of publishing a book about this community arts project. While many local residents do not feel like the statue represents them, many others claim to understand the creative and transformative process that the statue represents.

During 2010 and 2012, the group was going through a special phase of unity and strength. The women felt empowered and confident that they were going to win the case. At that moment, when they were at their strongest, they had the idea of starting a cultural center in Libertad oriented towards local gastronomy and cultural expressions. This collective idea represents how important culture and local traditions are for this group of local female leaders. Unfortunately, the group lost some momentum, and the entrepreneurial idea of creating a cultural center became too big an enterprise for their current capacity as a collective. But the women were successful in their main objective of achieving justice for themselves and for the entire Libertad community. In 2016, after eight years of denial, El Oso finally confessed the sexual crimes he committed in Libertad against these nine heroic leaders.

Photo 24. One of the nine women dancing with a police officer during the anniversary of the liberation of Libertad.

Performance and Empathy: Music as Peacebuilding in Libertad

The case of the nine women is another example of the fundamental role that local musical and cultural expressions play as part of peacebuilding and post-conflict collective reparation plans and initiatives in Libertad. Despite the specific agenda of these leaders to

prosecute El Oso for the sexual crimes committed against them—a topic not related to cultural revival or local cultural expressions—the performative strategies the women used were key for the sustainability of the initiative. This shows that, even when music or other cultural expressions are not at the core of local initiatives, some leaders still conceive of them as an important resource for enabling processes of connection and empathy that build the foundation for collective work in situations of heightened stress.

Throughout this dissertation, I have analyzed diverse sociocultural and historical conditions and mechanisms that contributed to the central role of music and other local performance practices in the local Collective Reparation Plan. I have also described a case to illustrate that local cultural and expressive practices can also perform important functions in other collective reparation and transitional justice initiatives not directly related to cultural recovery and arts programs. AFM's music project and Chabelo's revival of wake games focus on revitalizing local cultural expressions and developing new practices based on local cultural frameworks and aesthetics. The nine women, though, had a very different goal: demanding justice for themselves and all of women in Libertad who were victims of sexual war crimes. Yet, despite the difference in intention, music and expressive practices also ended up playing an important role in this process, keeping the group strong and united at crucial moments when cohesion was necessary to enable the continuity of the process.

Below, I will briefly address how the four conditions mentioned earlier in this chapter are also useful to explain the case of the nine women. First, there is the idea that traditional Afro-Colombian collective performance genres serve as powerful historical tools for generating empathy and solidarity among community members, as discussed in

the case of traditional funerary-wake games. In a similar fashion, I argue the success of the nine women's use of funerary-wake games was possible because these cultural expressions are deeply rooted in people's experiences in society and because they have historically served to alleviate social tensions. The fact that the games were performed in a different context—during the moments of the highest tension in the judicial process against El Oso—does not alter their structural social function. The games encouraged joyful, dynamic, and hopeful behavior and helped the women to move forward through difficult social situations that extended beyond the war crimes committed against them to include threats, pressure, and trauma experienced during the judicial process itself. Traditionally, the "difficult social situation" addressed through the performance of games is the death of a community member.

Second, in Chapter 3 I discussed the ability of local leaders to engage in meaningful social interactions and build relationships with organizations and institutions at all levels, with the aim of establishing cooperation within the local governing processes. The local leadership did not officially recognize the work of Chabelo and AFM until they began tackling issues of cultural revival and the regeneration of intergenerational relationships. They used their accumulated social capital to begin collaboration with entities such as the Victims Unit, the International Organization for Migration at the United Nations, the local Elder's Association of Libertad, the local Afro-Colombian Consejo Comunitario, the Colombian Ministry of Culture, the Municipality of San Onofre, the Department of Sucre, the NGOs Sembrando Paz, Negrita Films, Experiencia Records, Corporación Cabildo, and Fundación Hijos de la Sierra Flor; they also worked with individuals such as Camilo Conde, Isaías Guerrero, and myself, among others. Their capacity for networking and their

ability to blend performance and communal work were important for transforming their relationships with the local leadership. The nine women also had to struggle to gain recognition of their cause from the local CRP. The Impulse Committee and other local organizations did not support their cause until the women demonstrated the importance and viability of their endeavor. They could achieve this because they, too, established close relationships with several organizations and institutions (at least twenty of them) that supported their cause and provided them access to legal counsel, increased personal safety, channels to make their cause visible, and financial support to guarantee dignified living during the judicial process. The women used performance strategies to project and represent their stories, thereby sensitizing audiences locally and nationally.

Third, I discussed the resilience of local artists who strategically manage their cultural resources in creative ways to generate new musical practices and expressions that facilitate peacebuilding, thereby demonstrating the impact of strong local cultural leadership on communal rehabilitation. This argument, which I elaborated in Chapter 4, relates especially to bullenrap as a recently constructed local music practice created by AFM, who oriented it towards cultural revival and reducing tension in intergenerational relationships locally. The idea of resilience in local Afro-Colombian cultural materials, which people adapt to newer needs, contexts, and social situations, underlies this argument; Afro-Colombian musical practices are not stagnant, but evolve according to the specific needs of the people who sustain them (Bermúdez 1994). Another example of creativity and resilience to overcome a difficult situation related to the consequences of the armed conflict is the use of funerary-wake song-games by the nine women. As explained

earlier in this chapter, this creative use of a traditional expressive practice was fundamental to enabling the continuation of the judicial process.

Fourth, a grassroots community building processes controlled entirely by members of the local community is not possible in this case, since the CRP by nature is an institutional intervention program coordinated and funded by the Colombian government and with a public budget. The relationships between Liberteño leaders and state officials have been varied, and many different programs with diverse approaches have been implemented as part of the CRP. In these interactions, there have sometimes occurred cultural clashes related to policies and programs that do not resonate with local needs and practices.

In such situations—as I have shown in Chapter 5 with the case of AFM at the Caribbean Cultural Market in Cartagena—when these programs have a participatory approach that recognizes local logics and initiatives, their efficiency, sustainability, and scale are more likely to flourish. A culturalist approach to local expressive cultural practices and peacebuilding is more efficient in part because it runs on familiar roads: community members know and connect (in one way or another) with local cultural materials. A developmentalist approach to music and peacebuilding in the Colombian post-agreement context is likely to overlook the potential of collective musical practices in conflict transformation. It can also be problematic because it risks perpetuating ethnocentric relationships of domination related to capitalistic logics about the arts. Instead, music needs to be understood as a cultural practice beyond the idea of spectacle and show business, beyond staged and contained representations of local culture (*folclor*), and beyond cultural expressions as a purely aesthetic and intellectual exercise (as in the

fine arts). Traditional performance practices such as funerary-wake song-games construct a framework for social interaction that makes dealing with emotional hardship easier through joyful, communal practices that also strengthen collective action and solidarity. As explained earlier in this chapter, the fourth condition that allows local musical practice in Libertad to positively impact the local CRP is the participatory structure that institutional programs sometimes allow. I have argued here that this assumption is political and not based on empathy or affect. However, it enables the emergence of processes of social cohesion based on empathy and affect.

Local Cultural Expressions and Peacebuilding in Post-Conflict Settings

In this chapter I have analyzed how the four factors that contribute to the socially cohesive role of local cultural expressions in the CRP in Libertad are effective not only in the context of cultural programs but also in activities related to other aspects of post-conflict recovery and development. The case of the nine women is powerful because of the high stakes that were involved, the achievements made, and the resilience with which the group managed the entire process. However, it is also clear that, for cultural practices in Libertad to have this kind of impact in programs that are not culture-focused, local traditions needed to be strong or in the process of revival. The versatility of these local practices (and their practitioners) can create powerful frameworks for connection between community members, positively affecting the local networks of social interaction in relation to varied goals. Ultimately, these connections and effects trickle-up, generating transformations in the local social fabric—understood here as the network of neighbors' interaction, cooperation, and solidarity (McMillan and Chavis 1986, Grootaert and Van Bastelaer 2002).

The Libertad case shows how locally developed cultural expressions have tangible effects on the rehabilitation of the community in the context of post-conflict policy implementation (i.e., the Collective Reparation Plan). These practices have an impact both as cultural projects—which focus on the development, revival, teaching, performance, and research of local musical and cultural expressions—and as practices that accompany a range of other activities related to processes of collective reparation and community building that require empathy, affect, emotional discharge, connection, and mutual support.

Given the pervasiveness of aspects of local culture in several contexts of the CRP, it is worthwhile to question whether local cultural expressions could play similar roles in other CRPs nationally or in other post-conflict scenarios in other parts of the world. I undertook my research with a broader goal of understanding the potential roles of music and other local cultural expressions in constructively transforming communities in post-conflict scenarios. The insights gained and the conclusions made in this dissertation stem from ethnographic research within local contexts. However, I argue that a similar approach can be taken when looking at other contexts of music and peacebuilding in post-conflict settings. Therefore, these findings enable conceptualizing contributions for future research and practice in these fields, facilitating a theoretical and methodological approach that can be applied to diverse cultural contexts and sociopolitical settings. In particular, these following points need to be considered when addressing such a context, in which music (or other cultural expression) is being utilized as a peacebuilding mechanism in a post-conflict scenario: First, we must take into account the local histories of traditional cultural expressions; that is, how they have been used in the past in the commnunity, what their social uses and functions have been, what people remember about them, and the current

constructed memories about them. What ideas are associated to these practices? Have these expressions reflected any kind of capacity for generating frameworks for empathy and connection? Do the existing social conditions allow for the practice of these historically developed local cultural expressions? Have they been entangled in histories of conflict, violence and/or oppression?

Second, scholars and actors must understand the capacity of local cultural leaders to engage in and develop constructive relationships with representatives from organizations and institutions at multiple levels. Many times, post-conflict settings involve institutions, organizations, or other formalized entities that may have access to resources and networks of cooperation. Local leaders engaged with cultural expressions tend to be people with sensitivity and knowledge about local culture, which gives them a useful stance to approach these organizations and start multilevel networks of collaboration and solidarity to empower local culture specialists. Sometimes, these culture specialists may need outside validation and support to legitimize their activities and frame them as part of larger peacebuilding efforts.

Third, we must develop an understanding of the creativity and resilience of local artists in strategically using their local cultural resources to develop new creative processes and cultural revival initiatives Traditional cultural expressions sometimes need to be reshaped, reframed, or recontextualized to fulfill specific functions to advance peacebuilding goals in post-conflict situations. In this sense, intentional and consciously designed adaptations of traditional material that come from the initiative of local cultural specialists and leaders, are many times required to generate enough common-ground and

connecting bridges among people from the same community who may be having seemingly irreconciliable tensions and disputes.

Finally, understanding these processes requires attention to the spaces within participatory frameworks of institutional post-conflict programs that facilitate dialogue between stakeholders, as well as the acknowledgment of local needs and existing projects and processes related to cultural practices. Paternalistic approaches to program implementation, which recommend imposing plans without community consultation, are still common in development practice. To facilitate making arts- and tradition-based practices effective in post-conflict situations, it is necessary that community members and their leaders are acknowledged as peers in the stakholder network and have a say in how some of these implementations are carried out. This way, it is fundamental that local needs are identified through the cooperative work of program officials and community members.

Using the findings of this dissertation to generate new scholarship will help identify situations in which music can be an important asset to address communal fragmentation and other consequences of violence. More research related to the roles of music in peacebuilding processes is necessary to advance consistent policies that recognize the impact of cultural expressions in social transformation. In part, this is important because, currently, discussions about what I call here the "developmentalist" and the "culturalist" approaches to music in public policy related to post-conflict and peacebuilding in Colombia are practically nonexistent. The proposed framework can become a useful tool for scholars, policymakers, and program officials who must face these challenges, either on the ground or through theoretical reflection.

Given the culturally specific condition of the Libertad case, research in other regional CRPs in the Colombian Caribbean can be a potential starting point. These regions share cultural traits with Libertad, and cultural affinity is a factor that may play an important role in advancing research through the proposed framework. However, Collective Reparation Programs in other parts of Colombia—as well as other music and peacebuilding initiatives nationally and internationally—can also provide important information regarding the utility of this framework for understanding local cultural processes based on traditional practices as part of sustainable solutions to address the destructive consequences of armed conflict. In a world where the ghost of war never seems to depart, strategies that can mitigate the unavoidable effects of violent conflict on the most vulnerable populations are not only encouraged, but needed, in the field of ethnomusicology, in the academy, and in scholarship in general.

AFTERWORD

The recent history of music in the community of Libertad evolved in the direction of community-building due to its characteristic local organization and collective action processes that have been conditioned by both internal and external forces. In this dissertation, I have characterized the social processes that have enabled a constructive interconnection between cultural revival and peacebuilding efforts in this Afro-Colombian town. An analysis of these flows of activity explains multifaceted social phenomena that, when moved by proper forces under the right conditions, have the potential to facilitate the creation of environments in which local cultural expressions can play meaningful roles in peacebuilding and the development of sense of community.

I have focused on a period of roughly twenty years, since the paramilitary occupation of Libertad in 1996 to today, to explain the ways in which the interactions between post-conflict state programs and local cultural organizations and leaders are a meaningful locus for examining the roles of local cultural practices in advancing peacebuilding agendas. The largest portion of my ethnographic research was completed in November 2016. Although I had previously conducted research in Libertad beginning in January 2014, I stayed in total four and a half months spread throughout several visits as I traveled back and forth between Bogotá and this Caribbean village between October 2015 and November 2016.

At the time of this writing—March 2018—it has been sixteen months since I last did field research in Libertad; I returned only once for a one-day visit in January 2018. But I regularly communicate with a number of community members via phone and social

media. Through communications I have had recently with community members, as well as through their increased online presence on social networks, I have noticed the current momentum and dynamism of AFM's and Chabelo's cultural work in Libertyad, which leads me to assume that some of the instances and processes described in this dissertation as happening "in the present" have already changed. The level of local cultural activity continues to grow and seems stronger than before.

Here I will present a brief update on how some specific partnerships, associations, and local activities depicted in this dissertation have changed during the writing process. Despite these changes, local cultural processes are still thriving in this small Afro-Colombian community. Two main transformations have been salient: 1) the increased support to Ralam from the Ministry of Culture's Expedición Sensorial por los Montes de María (Sensorial Expedition through the María Mountains) program; and 2) the split between Ralam and Chabelo that resulted in Chabelo's departure from the AFM.

During the second half of 2016, the Sensorial Expedition, the Ministry of Culture's main "post-conflict" program, started to take place in the fifteen municipalities that constitute the María Mountains sub-region within the larger Colombian Caribbean region. This initiative, which is independent from the CRP, was intended to develop local cultural processes in the corregimientos and rural areas of the María Mountains. The Ministry of Culture chose Libertad as one of the communities to receive the program and chose Ralam as the local facilitator for this project. For the first time in his life, Ralam was paid a monthly salary to direct a performing group in town. Until October 2017, he was responsible for creating and directing two folkloric dance groups with children and young people. In the localities where cultural processes were already consolidated (as, for

example, some established folkloric festivals in this sub-region), the Ministry of Culture's workshops were oriented towards strengthening those already ongoing practices (*fortalecimiento de prácticas*). This process was operated by the Sincelejo-based foundation Hijos de la Sierra Flor (Children of the Flower Mountains). In towns and villages where local cultural processes were still taking shape, such as Libertad, the ministry implemented artistic "creation labs" (*laboratorios de creación*), conducted by Cartagena-based NGO Corporación Cabildo.

Even though the Sensorial Expedition and AFM are two separate projects, AFM benefitted greatly from Ralam's ties with the program. He received a monthly salary above minimum wage and shared it with his closest friends and relatives from the band for basic living expenses; he took part in numerous workshops on diverse skills related to the management of folkloric dance groups, such as choreography and repair of traditional instruments; and he also received a new set of drums and traditional instruments as well as outfits for his two dance groups. Members of AFM also participated in the dance groups, thereby benefitting from that training. Due in part to Ralam's participation and connections developed during the Sensorial Expedition, he could gather support for what became AFM's first EP[48] production *Voces de Mambú* (*Mambú Voices*, 2017).

During this time, he also collaborated with several artists regionally and nationally, increasing his network of collaborators in music scenes outside the region. AFM has been featured in several videos, press articles, and documentaries related to the Sensorial Expedition, materials produced at local, regional, and national levels that have increased the visibility of the project. Giving continuity to the ideas presented in Chapter 3 about the

[48] Extended play (EP) is a phonographic format that is longer in duration that the single, but shorter than the long play (LP). It usually includes between four and seven songs.

empowerment of local cultural leaders among the hegemonic local leadership, after Ralam managed this Ministry of Culture project the trust of the local leadership in him increased, allowing AFM more room, agency, and prominence in the CRP activities.

On the other hand, probably one of the most significant transformations in the local cultural processes has been the split between Chabelo and Ralam during the first half of 2017. Due to irreconcilable personal differences related partially to issues of cultural property of bullenrap and the participation of Chabelo's grandchildren in the group—a can of worms that I will not open in this dissertation—Chabelo and Ralam decided that they did not want to work together anymore. This situation resulted in her departure from AFM. This split marked an important shift in the group because three other members who had been key during my fieldwork also left with Chabelo: the percussionists Gleidance, Mr. Edins, and JM. Chabelo has been a strong leader locally for decades, and people have known and worked with her for a long time, not only because of her performance skills, but also because of her extensive knowledge about traditional practices, such as herbalism, prayer, and other healing activities. While Ralam is a young rising star in Libertad, Chabelo is an experienced and renowned leader who has participated in local cultural processes for a much longer time. She remains the strongest local cultural reference, and her bullerengue seed group with children continues to operate, although not with the same frequency and level of activity as AFM. Many of her neighbors and grandchildren as part of it.

When I arrived in Libertad for a daytrip in January 2018, I visited both Ralam and Chabelo. First, I arrived at Chabelo's house and drank coffee with her and her family, as well as with JM and Gleidance, who showed up to say hi. At Ralam's house, he and the

band had prepared a short show for me with some of new songs that I had not heard yet. Musically, AFM is now mixing diverse drum rhythms in one single song, with changes throughout the different sections, as well as more elaborated and diverse vocal parts that interlock a solo part with more intricate choral responses, thus displaying greater complexity in their arrangements compared to what I had last heard. I was also able to see that, despite the departure of Chabelo and the three drummers, many of the other core members had stayed, and many new children had begun actively participating in music training processes with the group. After visiting a couple of other families, I returned to Chabelo's house and found her living room full of people watching a movie on the TV. Because the room was darkened, it took me a couple of seconds to recognize that, interestingly, the bunch watching the film was most of the current AFM (sans Ralam), together with the members who had left the band with Chabelo.

This example shows that association, interaction, bonding, and connection between the members of the two groups remain strong, despite tensions between their leaders. Many members of AFM have some sort of relationship with Chabelo and her household: they are neighbors, relatives, or in-laws; they work with Chabelo or her relatives; or they are close friends and collaborators. Many members of AFM remember that Chabelo opened her house to them for a long and difficult season, when they could not stay at Ralam's house due to structural issues, and they are grateful for that. Thus, the relationship between Chabelo and AFM is not closed, for the people who participate socially in both spaces overlap heavily. Ralam, however, has detached himself from her work and is not currently interested in collaborating with her.

Such fluctuations in local processes of association should not be taken as irreconciliable: that would enable the problematic perspective of the ethnographic present. The same way I portrayed a specific moment in time when the dynamism of local cultural groups had a particular shape, I now am presenting a brief description of how such situation transformed at a particular period during the time of writing this dissertation. In the same way, I am not assuming that the transformations acknowledged here are "the end of history." Instead, I understood sociability, collaboration, and associativity as processes in flow and always changing: the forces of nature, history, and society in Libertad are not dependent on the narratives and representations reified in this dissertation. For example, during my fieldwork in June 2016, I found that some key members of AFM had left the band due to a fight with Ralam. They included the percussionist JLeo and three talented sisters (Paloma, María, and Mileidis) known as the MTs (*Las Emetés*), who sing, dance, and write lyrics. At the time, Chabelo was worried because the fight was taking on an upsetting tone. This separation was difficult because the MTs were a key element in AFM. During my fieldwork, their split seemed irreconcilable, and, they stopped talking altogether. The fight extended to some family members and even some neighbors. Looking at my fieldnotes, the grave tone with which everyone referred to this split, as well as the flammable tension between the people involved (never reaching violence), made it seem like a permanent separation.

However, the rhythms of sociability in any kind of social group, including small communities like Libertad, do not always operate with linear, straight-forward logics; thus they defy any easy assumptions about friendship, partnership, and associativity. In January 2018, I saw that those four members had returned to AFM and were again working with

Ralam. This is just a brief example of how networks of association are always in flux, and how mobility and adherence to specific organizations are never rigid. Simultaneously, a strong base of artists and cultural workers seems to remain linked, supporting local cultural processes related to music and other practices as part of one, two, or many other groups or associations. These artists and workers sometimes change affiliation, but nonetheless continue their connection with a larger local cultural movement.

One of the first questions that came to my mind when I heard about Chabelo's departure from AFM was whether the band had now changed its approach towards the building of intergenerational ties. Were they still focused on working with elders? Or did they focus only on young people now? On February 26, 2018, I asked Ralam this question via Whatsapp.[49] He responded that they still work with an intergenerational approach, but that their projects and proposals stem from the youth and their perspectives. AFM continues to take children to visit local elders to get learn the diverse range of skills that traditional masters specialize in. However, he says, it is the young people from within the organization who are now committed to transmitting and strengthening locally created music. Their main aim remains the same: to rehabilitate and strengthen local traditional musics and other cultural practices, including newer creations based on traditional materials. One of their motivations for this work is to prevent younger generations from experiencing a childhood like their own, a childhood characterized by fear, constraint, a lack of a knowledge of local culture, and the absence of a sense of belonging.

This short epilogue is not intended only as brief acknowledgment of the temporality and limitations of ethnographic approaches, although those are implicit, but rather as a

[49] Whatsapp is a mobile phone messaging application that is currently very popular in Colombia.

reflexive account that acknowledges the ongoing quality of this research. The Libertad case is a dynamic example of how phenomena related to local musics and peacebuilding can play out. Its dynamism makes it transform quickly. Therefore, a deep understanding of its processes during a specific period (ca. 1996-2017) sheds light on many core issues and questions that explain some of the many ways that people, cultural expressions and social transformation interact with each other. In this process, the need for the ethnographer to represent social reality as always in flux and transforming is paramount, especially in writing, which is a powerful technology for freezing and objectifying the messy, fragmented, and chaotic flux of social reality. Partially due this need, these final lines represent a temporal breach outside of the established timeline of this dissertation. This breach is intended to remind us to avoid the idea of ethnographic presents as standing for both pasts and futures as well as a way to continue to build scholarship that contributes to our understandings of the complex interactions between people, music, peacebuilding, and other forms of social transformation.

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Wade, Peter. 2002. "Construcciones de lo negro y de África en Colombia. Política y cultura en la música costeña y el rap" (Constructions of Blackness and Africa in Colombia. Politics and Culture in Coastal Music and Rap). In *Afrodescendientes en las Américas. Trayectorias sociales e identitarias. 150 años de la esclavitud en Colombia*, edited by Claudia Mosquera, Mauricio Pardo and Odile Hoffman. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 245-278.

Wade, Peter. 2000. *Music, Race, and Nation: Musica Tropical in Colombia.* Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Whitehead, Baruch. 2008. "We shall overcome: The roles of music in the US Civil Rights Movement." In Urbain, 78-91.

Whitten, Norman and Arlene Torres. 1998. "General Introduction: To Forge the Future in the Fires from the Past: An Interpretive Essay on Racism, Domination, Resistance, and Liberation." In *Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean. Social Dynamics and Cultural Transformations*, edited by Norman Whitten and Arlene Torres, pp. 3-33 (Vol. I). (eds). 1998. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Zelizer, Craig. (2003). "The role of artistic processes in peace-building in Bosnia-Herzegovina." *Peace and Conflict Studies* 10(2): 62-75.

APPENDIX 1

AFRO-MÚSICA EN LOS MONTES DE MARÍA'S ELEVATOR PITCH AT THE CARIBBEAN CULTURAL MARKET 2015. CARTAGENA, NOVEMBER 29, 2015.

Original Spanish version:

*Siete miembros de AFM están parados frente a alrededor de sesenta programadores y promotores culturales nacionales e internacionales en un salón durante el Mercado Cultural del Caribe, para realizar su discurso de ventas (*elevator pitch*).*

Ralam: ¿Quienes somos?
Group: Afro-Música
Ralam: ¿Con quién?
Group: Con Chabelo
Ralam: ¿Desde dónde?
Group: De Libertad
Ralam: ¿Para quién?
Group: Para el mundo

Ralam: Buenas tardes, nosotros somos Afro-Música, un colectivo de jóvenes que canta hip-hop fusionado con bullerengue. Venimos de la comunidad de Libertad, un pequeño pueblo al norte de San Onofre, Sucre, en la costa Caribe colombiana. A partir de la música, la revitalización de la memoria y de las tradiciones recuperamos el tejido social de nuestras comunidades, construyendo así un camino hacia la paz.

Reproduce video de un minuto preparado por la Unidad de Víctimas.

Gleidance: Por causas del conflicto armado que azotó a nuestra comunidad durante diez años, la gente se sumergió en el miedo y el silencio, se perdieron la confianza y la alegría. Por ejemplo, los actores armados prohibieron los cantos tradicionales como el bullerengue y los juegos de velorio. Afro-Música surge como una alternativa para volver a la música, crear resistencia cultural y generar conciencia social.

Paloma: Afro-Música canta una fusión de música urbana y ancestral. Para esto trabajamos con el grupo de adultos mayores de Libertad y con ellos investigamos la cultura tradicional. Estos saberes los asumimos desde nuestro presente, para así educar a la niñez y generar conciencia social. Los niños son el futuro de Libertad. Escribimos nuestras letras basados en lo que aprendemos de los mayores y luego cantamos nuestra música por todas las calles y barrios de Libertad, para difundir nuestro mensaje. Los niños ya saben las canciones y cantan con nosotros cuando salimos.

Faris: A través del arte de cantar hemos creado un puente entre la juventud, los adultos y los niños, recuperando el tejido social de nuestra comunidad después de la guerra. De esta

manera están volviendo la confianza y la alegría. Estamos borrando el estigma de los mayores hacia la juventud. Estamos creando paz.

JM: Afro-Música busca dar a conocer su mensaje fuera de Libertad para generar intercambios con experiencias similares y visibilizar nuestro proceso y poder seguir fortaleciendo el proyecto cultural de nuestro pueblo. Gracias.

Todos cantan fragmentos de la canción de AFM "Un pueblo que sueña."

(Todos cantan)
Si quieres ver a Libertad
Un pueblo en que se puede soñar
Pues yo te la voy a mostrar
Ven conmigo y vive la realidad.

(Todos rapean)
Caminando por las calles
De mi pueblo voy
Yo me siento muy contento
Porque bien estoy

Que lo escuche todo el mundo,
Liberteño soy
Por mi gente aquí cantando
Es que aquí estoy

Caminando por el mundo
Yo me siento orgulloso
Pero más de haber nacido
En un pueblo tan hermoso

Con todos mis compañeros
Les hablo del pueblo que sueña
Con orgullo les presento
A mi gente liberteña.

English translation:

Seven members of AFM stand in front of around sixty national and international music and culture programmers and promoters in a room at the Caribbean Cultural market in Cartagena to perform their "elevator pitch."

Ralam: Who are we?
Group: Afro-Música!
Ralam: With whom?

Group: With Chabelo!
Ralam: From where?
Group: Libertad!
Ralam: For whom?
Group: For the world!

Ralam: Good afternoon. We are Afro-Música, a young collective that sings a hip-hop music fusion with bullerengue. We come from the Libertad community, a small town north of San Onofre, Sucre, on the Colombian Caribbean coast. Through music and the revival of memory and traditions we regenerate the social fabric of our communities, thus building a path towards peace.

Plays one-minute video prepared by the Victims Unit.

Gleidance: Because of the armed conflict that affected our community for ten years, people lost trust and joy and the town was driven into fear and silence. For example, the armed actors forbid traditional chants such as bullerengue and funerary-wake games. Afro-Música emerges as an alternative to come back to music, to create cultural resistance and to generate social consciousness.

Paloma: Afro-Música sings a fusion of urban and ancestral musics. To do this, we work with the elderly adults' group in Libertad and, together with them, we research traditional culture. We embrace these knowledges from our present-day reality to educate the children and create social awareness. The children are the future of Libertad. We write our lyrics based on what we learn from the elderly and then we sing our music on the streets and neighborhoods of Libertad to spread our message. The children already know the songs and sing with us when we go out on the streets.

Faris: Through the art of singing we have created a bridge between the youth, the adults, and the children, recovering the social fabric of our community after war. This way, trust and joy are returning. We are erasing the stigma of elders against the youth. We are creating peace.

JM: Afro-Música seeks to spread its message outside of Libertad to generate exchange programs with similar experiences in other places and to make our process visible and continue strengthening our people's cultural project. Thank you.

Everybody sings fragments of AFM's song "Un pueblo que sueña" ("A Town that Dreams.")

(Everybody sings)
If you want to see Libertad
A town in which you can dream
Well, I will show it to you
Come with me and you can live reality.

(Everybody raps)
Walking through the streets
Of my town, I'm going
And I feel very happy
'Cause well I'm doing

Let everybody know
That Liberteño I am
Because of my people
Is that singing here I am

Walking through the world
I feel proud
But more of having been born
In such a beautiful town

With my all people, I talk
About the town that dreams
Proudly I present to you
The Liberteño peeps.

Curriculum Vitae

Juan Sebastián Rojas E., PhD
jsrojas@indiana.edu

PhD. Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology.
Indiana University Bloomington. United States.

Dissertation: *Drums, Raps, and Song-Games. An Ethnography of Music and Peacebuilding in an Afro-Colombian Caribbean Town. The Case of Libertad (Sucre).*

Defense date: 5/18/2018. Co-Chairs: Dr. John McDowell and Dr. Sue Tuohy.

Education

2013 – 2018	PhD, Dept. Folklore and Ethnomusicology Indiana University Bloomington Concentration: Ethnomusicology Track: Area Studies (Latin America) Doctoral Minor: Philanthropic Studies Doctoral Exams: September 5, 2014 Graduation: July 27, 2018
2010 – 2013	MA in Ethnomusicology Indiana University Bloomington Dept. Folklore and Ethnomusicology Graduation: May 2013 Thesis defense: December 12, 2012 Thesis Advisor: Dr. Javier Leon.
1999 – 2005	Universidad Nacional de Colombia Bogotá, Colombia Bachelor of Anthropology Graduated: July 2005
1985 – 1999	Colegio Andino – Deutsche Schule Bogotá , Colombia High school graduate. ICFES Score: 373/400.

Professional Experience (summary since 2007)

- **University of El Bosque (Bogotá). Masters in Colombian Musics Program**. Lecturer. Bogotá. 8/2017 – Present. I teach the graduate seminars History of Colombian Musics 1 and 2. Chair: Javier Pérez. mmusicascolombianas@unbosque.edu.co
- **Sonidos Enraizados Cultural Corporation.** Research Project Director. Bogotá. 8/2016 – Present. I develop research projects about music, historical memory, peace, community building, intangible cultural heritage, and participatory-action methodologies. Currently, I direct the research project "Transhumant Festivals: Popular Celebrations from the Colombian Pacific in Bogotá." Chair: Lucía Ibáñez. sonidosenraizados@gmail.com

- **Archives of Traditional Music - Indiana University.** Graduate Assistant / Hourly employee. 6/2013–7/2015. Past contract: 8/2010–7/2012. Contributed to several projects, including: the development of policies to regulate processes of repatriation of archival materials (2015); a repatriation project to accession ATM's Colombian field recordings into the National Library of Colombia (2012), produced an audio-documentary for the Archive's website (2012), curated and coordinated the Noon Concert and Lecture Series (2013-2014), and produced digital-access copies of the collections and documentation for patrons (2010-2015). Director: Prof. Alan Burdette. aburdett@indiana.edu

- **Archives of African American Music and Culture-Indiana University**. Graduate Assistant. 8/2012 – 5/2013. Worked on materials' preservation; on the production of short podcasts about the archives' collections; and on outreach activities, such as CD reviews for the Archive of African American Music and Culture's publication Black Grooves.
  Director: Prof. Mellonee Burnim, PhD. burnim@indiana.edu

- **Reef Records SAS**. Research Director, Board member, and Co-Founder.
  Bogota, Colombia. 9/2008 – 7/2012. Reef Records is a company that works on musical production, research, booking, and outreach with traditional Colombian music artists. It has released five phonograms with Afro-Colombian artists, as well as two documentaries, and several video-clips. CEO: Daniel Restrepo. danieltrepo@gmail.com

- **Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage / Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History.** Cultural interpreter.
  Washington DC. 6/2011 - 7/2011. Did cultural interpretation and translation for the Smithsonian Folklife Festival program "Colombia: The Nature of Culture."
  Curators: O. Cadaval, CadavalO@si.edu; M. Reyes, mreyes@museonacional.gov.co.

- **Intangible Heritage Group - Ministry of Culture of Colombia**. Researcher.
  Bogotá, Colombia. 3/2010 – 7/2010. Principal Investigator in the diagnostic phase of a project aimed at including the "Concurso Nacional de Bandas Musicales de Paipa" contest into the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Director Intangible Heritage Group: Adriana Molano. amolano@mincultura.gov.co

- **Centro Integral de Rehabilitación de Colombia (CIREC)**. Researcher, music facilitator.
  San Jacinto and Bogota (Colombia). 2/2010 – 7/2010. Accompanied displaced population return to their ancestral territory, the town of Bajo Grande (Bolívar), through community arts activities, including local music workshops.
  Coordinator: Silvia Ojeda. lasilviojeda@gmail.com

- **Chocó Cultural Research Association (ASINCH).** Researcher.
  Bogota (Colombia). 3/2009 – 7/2009. I collaborated in the creation of an archival resources database towards the construction of the main collection of the Technological University of Choco's "Corp-Oraloteca". Directora: Ana María Arango. asinch.choco@gmail.com

- **National Museum of Colombia.** Assistant curator / Music curator.
  Bogota (Colombia). 3/2007 – 3/2008. Additional time: 6/2008 – 8/2008. I assisted the museum's Ethnography and Archeology Curator and led the music research related to the temporal exhibit "Magdalena River: Navigating through a nation."
  Ethnography and Archeology Curator: Margarita Reyes. mreyes@museonacional.gov.co

- **Regional Center for Coffee and Entrepreneurial Studies**. Research assistant. Manizales (Colombia). 5/2006 – 10/2006. Worked in the project "Program evaluation of the implementation of 'Escuela Nueva' methodologies, with integrated textbooks for elementary school population of the Colombian Pacific region." I conducted fieldwork in the Pacific Coast and socialized results with the Colombian Ministry of Education. Director: Patricia Enciso. patrienciso@yahoo.com

Publications

- 2017. *Cuentos Costeños: Animal Tales from the Caribbean Littoral of Colombia*, by George List (posthumous). Co-editor with John McDowell. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- 2017. "El Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial en Colombia como Política de Estado: El Caso del Concurso Nacional de Bandas" (Intanglible Cultural Heritage in Colombia as State Policy: The case of the National Brass-Bands Contest). *Revista Encuentros* 15 (2). Universidad Autónoma del Caribe.
- 2016. "Arroyo (Álvaro José Arroyo González), Joe." In *Dictionary of Caribbean and Afro–Latin American Biography*, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Franklin W. Knight. SPi Global/Oxford University Press.
- 2015. Book Review. Aharonián, Coriún (editor). *La Música Entre África y América*. (*Music between Africa and the Americas*). Montevideo, Uruguay: Centro de Documentación Musical Lauro Ayestarán, Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, 2013. *Latin American Music Review* 36 (2): 276-278.
- 2013. *From Street Parrandas to Folkloric Festivals: The Institutionalization of Bullerengue Music in the Colombian Urabá Region*. MA Thesis. Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology. Indiana University. ProQuest, 2013.
- 2012. "Cumbia: The Construction of a Musical Genre in the Mid-twentieth Century." Audio podcast for the Archives of Traditional Music, IU. Online resource: http://www.indiana.edu/~libarchm/index.php/outreach/podcasts.html.
- 2012. "Cumbiamba y música parrandera. Desde el Magdalena Grande hasta el Urabá" (Cumbiamba and party music: From the Great Magdalena to Urabá). Liner notes, CD *Tamborito Alegre – Juicio mi Tía* (Reef 004). Bogotá: Reef Records.
- 2012. "'Me siento orgullosa de ser negra y, ¡que viva el bullerengue!' Identidad étnica en una nación multicultural: El caso del Festival Nacional del Bullerengue en Puerto Escondido, Colombia" ("I feel proud to be Black, and ¡Viva el bullerengue!" Ethnic identity in a multicultural nation: The case of the National Bullerengue Festival in Puerto Escondido, Colombia). *Revista Cuadernos de Música, Artes Visuales y Artes Escénicas* 7 (2): 139-158.
- 2012. "Afrocolombian Music." In *Celebrating Latino Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Cultural Traditions, Volume 1*, edited by Maria Herrera Sobek, p.19-23. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO.
- 2012. *La Ruta del Bullerengue* (*The Bullerengue Route*). Video documentary, with the Ministry of Culture of Colombia. Credit: Researcher. Bogotá: Reef Records.

- 2009. "Los gaiteros de Bogotá: Una perspectiva sobre el trasplante musical de la gaita a la capital" (Bogotá Gaiteros: A perspective on the transplantation of gaita music to the capital city of Colombia). In *Translaciones, Legitimaciones e Identificaciones. Música y Sociedad en Colombia*, edited by Mauricio Pardo, p. 269-288. Bogotá: Universidad del Rosario.
- 2009. "El bullerengue Grande de Urabá" (The Grand Bullerengue from Uraba). Liner notes, CD *Bulla! - Tradición Bullerenguera de San Juan de Urabá* (Reef 003). Bogotá: Reef Records.
- 2009. "Música de baile en Providencia Isla" (Dance music in Old Providence Island). Liner notes, CD *Island Groove – Caribbean Roots Vol. 1* (Reef 001). Bogotá: Reef Records.
- 2008. Texts about music in *Rio Magdalena. Navigating through a Nation*. National Museum of Colombia. Catalog for the eponymous temporary exhibition. Ministry of Culture of Colombia.
- 2008. *Providence Style*. Video documentary. Original conception and director. Bogotá: Mestiza Records and Ministry of Culture of Colombia.

Forthcoming

- (In print). "Dilemmas on the Repatriation of Field-Recordings: Colombian Collections at the IU Archives of Traditional Music." Article.
- (In print). "Fiestas Trashumantes: Celebraciones patronales del Pacífico afrocolombiano en Bogotá" (Transhumant Festivals: Patron Saint Celebrations from the Afro-Colombian Pacific in Bogotá). Co-authorship with Lucía Ibáñez and Urián Sarmiento.

Awards and Distinctions

- 2017. Music Research Scholarship. Bogotá Institute for the Arts – Idartes. Bogotá.
- 2017. Eoyang-Lee Fellowship. Office of International Services. Indiana University Bloomington.
- 2016. Ronald R. Smith Fellowship. Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology. Indiana University Bloomington.
- 2016. Colombians Studying Arts/Culture Abroad Scholarship. Ministry of Culture of Colombia.
- 2016. College Arts and the Humanities Institute. Travel grant for academic conference. Indiana University Bloomington.
- 2015. Richard M. Dorson Dissertation Research Award 2015. Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology. Indiana University Bloomington.
- 2015. Graduate Research Grant. Center for Research on Race and Ethnicity. Indiana University.
- 2015. Research Award. Graduate and Professional Student Organization. Indiana University.
- 2014. Ronald R. Smith Fellowship 2014. Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology. Indiana University Bloomington.
- 2013-2014. Member of HonorSociety.org.

- 2011. Tinker Field Research Grant. Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Indiana University Bloomington.
- 2010-2014. Four consecutive years of academic appointments as Graduate Assistant at Indiana University Bloomington, College of Arts and Sciences.
- 2010-2012. Colfuturo Scholarship-Credit Program. Colfuturo. Bogotá.
- 2012. Grant for Documentary Film Development. Ministry of Culture of Colombia. Bogotá.
- 2007. National Artistic Residence. Ministry of Culture of Colombia. Bogotá.
- 2005. National Artistic Intership. Ministry of Culture of Colombia. Bogotá.

Jury and Peer-Review

- 2018. Master's thesis jury. Student: Bibiana Parra. Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts School. Universidad Central. Bogotá.
- 2018. Master's thesis jury. Student: Guillermo Villarreal. Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts School. Universidad Central. Bogotá.
- 2018. Selection committee. "IV National Conference on Colombian Musics." Bandolitis Foundation and Canto Por La Vida Foundation. Ginebra (Valle), Colombia.
- 2017. Jury. "Sound Archives Management Grant." National General Archive and Ministry of Culture of Colombia. Bogotá.
- 2017. Article peer-review. *Revista Resonancias.* Universidad Católica de Chile. Santiago (Chile).
- 2017. Article peer-review. *Cuadernos de Música, Artes Visuales y Artes Escénicas*. Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. Bogotá.
- 2015. Jury. "Artistic Programming Grant." Bogotá Public Libraries City Network – Biblored.
- 2015. Article peer-review. *Revista Transcultural de Música.* SIBE Sociedad de Etnomusicología. Barcelona (España).
- 2013. Research Project evaluation for the Dance and Theater Program. Universidad Antonio Nariño. Bogotá.

Conference Papers and other Highlighted Presentations

- 2018. Guest speaker, with Lucía Ibáñez and Urián Sarmiento (Sonidos Enraizados). Paper: "Fiestas Trashumantes: Celebraciones populares del Pacífico afrocolombiano en Bogotá" (Transhumant Festivals: Popular celebrations from the Afro-Colombian Pacific in Bogotá). National Colombian Musics Conference – MAC. Canto La Vida Foundation and Bandolitis Foundation. Ginebra (Valle), Colombia. Abril 26-29, 2018.
- 2017. Speaker in a workshop (video). Video: "Ethical Considertions on Music and Peacebuilding." Workshop at the 55th Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting. Denver (Co), Oct. 26, 2017.

- 2017. Speaker at the academic event *Afrocolombias: Conflicto y Reconciliación*. Paper: "Músicas Locales Afro-Colombianas y Construcción de Paz en Libertad (Sucre)" (Afro-Colombian Local Musics and Peacebuilding in Libertad, Sucre). Afro-Colombian Studies Group. National University of Colombia. Bogotá, October 18, 2017.
- 2017. Guest speaker at the course "Toca la Marimba de Chonta". Presentation: "Festival Petronio Álvarez: Marimba y las Políticas de la Escenificación" (The Petronio Alvarez Music Festival: Marimba and the Politics of Staging). School of Fine Arts, National University of Colombia. Bogotá, June 13, 2017.
- 2017. XVI Anthropology Conference in Colombia. Paper: "Músicas Locales y Construcción de Paz en Libertad (Sucre)" (Local Musics and Peacebuilding in Libertad, Sucre). Bogotá, June 7, 2017.
- 2016. 54th Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting. Paper: "Local musics and peacebuilding in Colombia: Collective reparation and post-conflict in an Afro-Caribbean town". Washington DC, November 9, 2016.
- 2016. 5th Great Caribbean and Colombian Caribbean Music Researchers Meeting. Talk: "Música Afro-Liberteña y Tejido Social. Construcción de Paz y Capital Social en Contextos de Post-Conflicto" (Afro-Liberteño Music and Social Fabric: Peacebuilding and Social Capital in Post-Conflict Contexts). Universidad del Atlántico. Barranquilla. October 12, 2016.
- 2016. Inaugural address at the course "Diálogos en Música" II/2016. "Etnomusicología y Músicas Tradicionales Colombianas" (Ethnomusicology and Traditional Colombian Musics). Universidad El Bosque. Bogotá. August 23, 2016.
- 2016. III National Colombian Musics Conference – MAC. Paper: "Música Afro-Liberteña y Tejido Social. Construcción de Paz y Capital Social en Contextos de Post-Conflicto" (Afro-Liberteño Music and Social Fabric: Peacebuilding and Social Capital in Post-Conflict Contexts). Ginebra (Valle), Colombia. April 21-24, 2016.
- 2015. Bogotá Meeting of Musical Researchers – Knowledge Dialogues in Musical Research. Organizing Committee and Event Moderator. Mesa de Investigación Musical de Bogotá (Mimbta), Instituto Distrital para las Artes. Bogotá, Sep. 9 and 14, Oct. 1-2, 2015.
- 2015. Music Research and Music Education International Symposium, Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. Paper: "From Street Parrandas to Folkloric Festivals: The Institutionalization of Bullerengue Music in the Colombian Urabá Region." Bogotá, Sep. 30, 2015.
- 2015. Percussion Department, Jacobs School of Music, IU. Percussion master class: "Afro-Colombian Percussion. A New World Tradition." Feb. 25, 2015. With Andrew R. Miller.
- 2014. Archives of Traditional Music, IU. Lecture/performance at the ATM Noon Concert and Lecture Series: "Marimba De Chonta: An Afro-Colombian Xylophone." Oct. 17, 2014.
- 2014. Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Graduate Student Conference, IU. Paper: "Knowledge Production and Social Mobilization: Interactions in the Colombian Context". Mar. 7-8, 2014.
- 2013. Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Conference 2013. Paper: "Bullerengue Street Performance and Communitas: Social Contestation through Pleasure and Community Construction". Indianapolis, Nov. 14-17, 2013.

- 2013. National Library of Colombia. Presentation: "Repatriation of George List's Collection of Colombian Field Recordings." Two presentations: Aug. 3, 2012 and Sep. 12, 2013.
- 2012. Archives of Traditional Music, IU. "George List's Fieldwork in Rural Colombia." Mar. 30, 2012.
- 2011. Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, IU. Presentation for Tinker Field Research Grant Program: "Bullerengue Festivals on the Colombian Atlantic Coast in the Frame of Multiculturalism: The Construction of Regional Ethnic Identities through Traditional Music and Dance." Nov. 4, 2011.
- 2010. Archives of Traditional Music, IU. "Afro-Colombian Music." International Students Showcase, Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology. Sept. 2010.

Musical Experience

I did music and percussion studies at Academia Superior de Artes De Bogotá (ASAB): 2002-2003.

I have studied multiple regional styles of percussion and Afro-Colombian musics since 2002, with the following regional masters:

- Isabel Martínez "Chabelo." Libertad (Sucre). Funerary-wake song-games. 2016-2018.
- Emilsen Pacheco. San Juan de Urabá (Antioquia). *Bullerengue* and *baile cantao*. 2005-2016.
- Éver Suárez. Arboletes (Antioquia). *Bullerengue* y *baile cantao*. 2006-2009.
- Juan David Castaño. Bogotá. Pacific Coast Colombian musics. 2005-2009.
- José A. Torres "Gualajo" from Guapi (Cauca). Afro-Colombian marimba music. 2005-2007.
- Francisco "Pacho" Banguera from Guapi (Cauca). Afro-Colombian marimba music. 2005-2007.
- Migdonio Rivas. Quibdó (Chocó). *Chirimía* and Chocoano music. 2005-2008.
- Cecilio "El Negro" Lozano. Quibdó (Chocó). *Chirimía* and Chocoano music. 2005-2008.
- Mario Becerra. Quibdó (Chocó). *Chirimía* and Chocoano music. 2005.
- Silvino Mina. Guapi (Cauca). Afro-Colombian marimba music. 2005-2006.
- Freddy Suárez. Arboletes (Antioquia). *Bullerengue* and *baile cantao*. 2004-2006.
- Francis Lara. San Jacinto (Bolívar). Traditional flutes (*gaitas*) and drums music. 2003-2005.
- José "Joche" Plata. San Jacinto (Bolívar). Traditional flutes (*gaitas*) and drums. 2002-2005.
- Javier Fernández de San Jacinto (Bolívar). Traditional flutes (*gaitas*) and drums. 2002-2004.
- Laureano Tejedor "Lámpara." San Basilio de Palenque (Bolívar). Palenquero music. 2002.

Other studies of music and percussion:

- Michael Spiro (USA). Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian percussion and music. 2013-2015. Bloomington, IN.
- Djo Bi Irie Simon from Ivory Coast (Guro). Traditional Ivorian music and percussion. 2010-2015. Bloomington, IN.
- Bernard Woma from Ghana (Dagara). Traditional Ghanaian music and Percussion. 2010-2013. Bloomington, IN.
- Javier León from Lima (Perú). Afro-Peruvian music and percussion. 2012. Bloomington, IN.

- Milena Contreras from Bogotá. Body Rhythm and Eurhythmics. 2005-2006. Bogotá.
- Urián Sarmiento from Bogotá. Drum-set. 2001-2003. Bogotá

I have directed the following ensembles:

- **La Chirrimía Balsámica -** Bogotá. 2006-Present.
  Percussion and winds sextet, based on repertoires and sonorities from *chirimía chocoana* tradition. Based on our own writing and arrangements of traditional pieces, La Balsámica reinterprets Chocoano music into free jazz, pop and punk, but keeping the party, liberated, and upbeat logic of street musics. Song "El Bosudo", 2017: https://youtu.be/9W_-VmeC96w
- **Grupo La Rueda** - Bogotá. 2004-Present.
  Bullerengue and other drums-and-chants Afro-Colombian musics. This was the first *bullerengue* group from Bogotá to win several awards at national *bullerengue* festivals. It has been an important space for spreading these musics in the city of Bogotá through participatory street performances in parks and other public space environments. Live video, 2009: https://youtu.be/38gQYnmO2c0
- **Birimbí** - Bloomington (Indiana, EEUU). 2013-2015.
  Afro-Colombian marimba ensemble accompanied by conga drums, bombo drum, Mexican jarana, upright bass and saxophones. We perform original songs and arrangements of traditional pieces, mixing aesthetics from the Colombian Pacific and Caribbean regions with other styles of Caribbean popular music from the second half of the 20th century. CD *Duro Contra el Muro*, 2015: https://birimbi.bandcamp.com/releases
- **Jiridón -** Bloomington, IN (EEUU). 2011-2014.
  It is a fusion of Afro-Colombian musics (*currulao, cumbia, bullerengue, tamborito*, etc.) with African-American sonorities (funk, hip-hop, rock) and West African styles (Ghanaian, Guinean, and Ivorian musics). This band conducted workshops and performed at world music festivals throughout the US Midwest region. Live Video, 2013: https://youtu.be/Cm_069J2V68

Since 2001, I have participated in these other ensembles (selection):

- In Bogotá:
  Tumbacatre (Pacific fusion), La Revuelta (Pacific marimba and fusión), El Palenque de Delia Zapata (tradicional Afro-Colombian), Bandejas Espaciales (electronic Caribbean), Palanka (Caribbean funk fusion), La Polifónica (Caribbean/Pacific fusion), Mágica (Caribbean rock-pop), Son Batucaré (traditional gaita music), Maquinó Landero (traditional accordion music), Chigualito (Pacific marimba and fusión), Ensamble Guadalupe (Caribbean rock fusion).
- In Bloomington, IN:
  Bangofla (West African), The Double Digits (hot club jazz), The Magmatix (funk, afrobeat), Svetla Vladeva's Eastern European Ensemble, IU Ghanaian Music and Dance Ensemble, IU Brazilian Percussion Ensemble, IU Afro-Cuban Percussion Ensemble, Kermes (Balcan music).

Participation as musician and/or researcher at traditional Colombian music festivals:

- Festival Nacional del Bullerengue de Puerto Escondido (Córdoba). 9 times, 2004-2016.
- Festival Nacional de Gaitas Francisco Llirene de Ovejas (Sucre). 2 times, 2015-2016.
- Festival de Tambores y Expresiones Culturales de San Basilio de Palenque (Bolívar), 2015.
- Festival Nacional del Bullerengue de Marialabaja (Bolívar). 2 times, 2009-2015.
- Festival Ecológico del Bullerengue por la Paz de Libertad (Sucre), 2014.
- Festival de Música del Pacífico Petronio Álvarez. Cali. 5 times, 2003-2011.
- Festival Nacional de la Marimba de Chonta. Cali, 2009.
- Festival Nacional del Bullerengue de Necoclí (Antioquia), 2008.
- Festival Nacional de la Tambora en San Martín de Loba (Bolívar), 2006.
- Fiestas de San Pacho de Quibdó (Chocó), 2005.
- Festival Autóctono de Gaitas en San Jacinto (Bolívar), 2004.

Language Proficiency

- Spanish (Native speaker)
- English (Second language)
- German (Deutsches Sprachdiplom II)